
King Ubu hits town

12/7/90

There is playing in Glasgow this week a quite excellent production by the Katona Jozsef Company of Budapest of Jarry's satirical and surrealist comedy, King Ubu. This play was the first work of the Theatre of the Absurd. When it was produced in Paris in 1896 it closed after two nights of rioting. It subverts authority, revealing its absurdity, incoherence and cruelty, and it comes to us at a time when corrupt dictatorships are being undermined. The message that authority can be exercised only with consent has a continuing relevance. The play is presented in Glasgow with a simultaneous translation which is really unnecessary because the company's work, athletic and exuberant, is visually explicit and each change of scene is signalled by ad-hoc graphics (in English) rather in the manner of old silent movies.

This production is part of the Five Theatres of the World season at the Theatre Royal. We mention it because, like the earlier season of contemporary dance, or like Glasgow's Glasgow, it is not being well supported by the public. Opponents of the Year of Culture as an idea, the Kelmanites as they are now being called after their

leader, the writer James Kelman, who resent the diversion of funds from People's Palace and elsewhere to the exhibition Glasgow's Glasgow, will seize upon the theatre season as another example of the year's irrelevance to the real culture of Glasgow — showing that you can take a horse to water but you can't make it drink.

More prosaic analysts will tell you that July is a difficult month in Glasgow. People are also deterred by plays in foreign languages. Another factor is expense, recognised by the decision to cut Glasgow's Glasgow prices. Perhaps if the Elspeth King affair were to be satisfactorily concluded — by the upgrading of her post — then Glasgow's Glasgow might encounter less public indifference. But generally in this year the calls on time and purse are so extensive that only a truly metropolitan centre might be able to answer them. What is more, the recession in the south may be reducing the flow of visitors. Perhaps the organisers of 1990 should have paced the year more. In these circumstances we do not urge our readers to attend King Ubu: it is a matter for them. But we do think they will not be disappointed if they do. It is fun.

...ential-conveyancing market valued by The Law Society of Scotland at £160m-175m a year, has approached one of the largest estate agents in Scotland.

The Sasines executives supplied the estate agents with details of professional and conveyancing expertise in readiness for the licensing of new

are dismayed at their current high workload following the change of the department's status last month to become the first government agency in Scotland, putting it on a commercial, self-financing footing but leaving them on civil-service salary grades.

The high workload and low pay compared to the private

ess for the licensing of new practitioners by the Scottish conveyancing board, which is to be set up under the law-reform bill.

The National Association of Estate Agents welcomed the Sasines initiative, and Alick Noakes, chairman of the Scottish branch, added: "There is more than one way to skin a

...the market, with a drop of 4.4% in the first quarter of this year, according to latest figures compiled for GA Properties. Prices for small houses and flats and semi-detached houses are not keeping pace with inflation, and only terraced houses are keeping their value in real terms, with prices rising by 3.5% in the first three months of the year.

...adow radio authority.

Dalkeith will automatically be appointed to the eight-man board of the ITC, which will sit from January next year. The new commission is required by legislation to take "special responsibility" for independent television output in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales.

15/7/90
Bill Jameson, the assistant

pany, launched to broadcast to Dumfries and Galloway.

Tom Cairns, financial controller, said: "Dalkeith is a media buff, and takes an active part in all our board meetings."

A spokesman for the Home Office in London would only confirm that "a number of names are being considered". Dalkeith was unavailable for comment.

Writer right to shun cultural spend-up

IF you talk to people in London about Glasgow and culture, they will probably mention the Burrell first. If they are musically inclined, they will talk of Scottish Opera and the SNO. In the world I move in, they are most likely to speak of writers.

In particular, they mention James Kelman and Alasdair Gray. They will probably know that Anthony Burgess declared Gray, on the strength of Lanark, to be "the first important Scottish novelist since Sir Walter Scott", and they will certainly know that James Kelman's most recent novel was short-listed for the Booker prize.

Indeed, you might say that if it were not for their work and the understanding derived from it that important and unusual and innovative things are being written in Glasgow, then Glasgow's application to be selected as the City of Culture might have been every bit as glossy as it was, but would somehow have lacked authority.

The fact is that a city may be rich in galleries, museums, theatres and concert halls (and we all hope that Glasgow's new one will actually manage to open during 1990), but if it does not have living artists of significance, it is, culturally speaking, a morgue. Glasgow is fortunate

As Glasgow authorities take offence at a local Scottish novelist's attitude to their priorities in spending money, **ALLAN MASSIE** reports that such a critical stance really improves the city's reputation



to have such people, and you would think that the city authorities, who are getting a lot of fun and some glory out of their year of parading on Europe's cultural stage, would be suitably grateful.

Well, it so happens that they are not. On the contrary, they are rather miffed. The reason is that some of the writers, Kelman among them, have taken a distinctly less than enthusiastic view of Glasgow 1990.

If I remember rightly, "less than enthusiastic" is a euphemism. Drawing attention to the contrast between what was being spent on City of Culture activities and what was not being spent on the poorer parts of the city, I think he employed the word "obscenity" and suggested that the whole thing was a Glasgow

Labour party PR ramp. Now I can see that was annoying.

Here you have all these chaps in the city chambers getting up a sweat promoting culture, and very pleased with themselves, and saying: "What's like us for culture?" Then along comes a genuine artist, a sort of fellow who ought, as they would think, to be one of the luminaries of the whole show, and instead of being properly grateful to the boys in sharp suits, as a mere (if, of course, genuine) artist should be, he cocks a snook at them and makes rude noises. Shocking.

So it is not surprising that Pat Lally, the culture-loving - in an absolutely genuine way - leader of the Labour group should, in the course of a 2,000-word document, have

delivered himself of some sharp words about "well-heeled authors and critics who refuse to dirty their hands by participating in 1990".

As I say, he cannot be blamed for feeling irritated, but if he had paused to reflect, he might have realised that this dissent was, in fact, at the same time an affirmation of Glasgow's cultural vitality.

It would have seemed false and hypocritical if Kelman had spoken otherwise, or if he had eagerly participated in the Grand Jamboree. Kelman is a remarkable writer whose work is rooted in dissent. He says "No" to the way things are.

He speaks out for the individual against the system, and would, I believe, do so whatever the system was. In suggesting that the Glasgow Labour party has failed the people, he may be wrong, but he reflects a view of things that is widely shared.

The second reason why Kelman's dissent is both inevitable and honourable goes beyond the personal. The novel is a picture of men in society, and almost always a criticism of society. The novel's central themes are human nature and the way people live, and it nearly always expresses itself as opposition art. Things are not perfect, the good corrupted, convention makes hypo-

crites of men and women, cant is preferred to honesty - that is the way life goes, especially public life, and the novelist points this out.

He would not be true to himself if he did not, and he would be a less valuable member of society. One of his duties is to speak the truths which politicians - even the leaders of city Labour parties - dare not admit.

Of course, if all art were subversive and critical in this manner, society would be in a bad way. Fortunately, there are other forms of art which are affirmative, which celebrate achievement and proclaim that life is good. Glasgow is rich in this kind of art also, and it is such art which is most visible and most honoured in this Year of Culture.

But if that art, which is officially approved, was all we had, the result would be sterility. Fortunately there is also Kelman, and these other writers who refuse to dirty their hands by participating in 1990.

The last laugh, I am glad to say, is his for two reasons. He will be read when 1990 is only a distant memory and, ironically, Pat Lally in his less-than-coherent indignation has got it absolutely right - for Kelman to participate in 1990 would, indeed, be to dirty his hands.



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Are Glaswegians already 'cultu of Culture? David Kemp takes

PINNED TO the wall of many a television cutting room is a justly celebrated (and remarkably accurate) description of the life cycle of any project. It begins, of course, with the mandatory, long, "creative" lunches, but the early optimism is soon replaced by panic and the hunt for scapegoats. The inevitable conclusion is the punishment of the innocent and rewards (or awards) for the guilty. The Year of Culture seems to be following this trajectory with uncanny precision.

The emerging scenario makes it clear that if the YoC is to be a financial disaster (and the current loss on ticket sales alone is, I understand, currently projected at £15m.), then no blame must be allowed to attach itself to those who might be responsible among the circus of cultural carpet-baggers that descended on Glasgow to make 1990 in their image. After all, they're probably already planning Antwerp's Antwerp for 1993, and disasters don't read too well on the cv's.

Frenzy is now the order of the day. Thus Neil Wallace, depute director of festivals, in his now celebrated "letter from the bunker": "The pathetic, factless, plank-walking anti-1990-ism of McLay, Kelman, Savage and all the rest is an embarrassment to this city and all of its cultural workforce."

And Pat Lally: "The only people who are excluded from 1990 are those who choose deliberately to exclude themselves. Among these are the well-heeled authors and critics who refuse to dirty their hands by participating in 1990; hundreds of thousands of ordinary Glaswegians have begged to differ from these dilettanti, and their numbers have swollen attendances to our galleries and theatres beyond all expectations."

I find myself confused.

Is it now the fact that a city with a "cultural workforce" can now ignore its own "culture" (for that, like it or not, is what Jim Kelman undoubtedly represents), and that a safe, packaged, bland, internationally-acceptable "culture" will be provided for us by the "cultural workforce" who now travel the world searching for art and theatre in ever

"Is it now the fact that a city with a "cultural workforce" can now ignore its own "culture". . and that a safe, packaged, bland, internationally-acceptable "culture" will be provided for us . . ?

more far-flung and exotic locations?

On my last two trips to Paris, for instance, I have noticed a smart young, female executive on the plane. Was she, I wondered, a buyer on her way to the collections. Then I saw her in the pub. She turned out to be a co-ordinator for "Streetbiz", which, I assume, brings buskers to Glasgow after extensive searches throughout Europe, and for all I know, beyond. I am sure that the Saturday morning shoppers in Argyle Street cannot realise that even street entertainment is now provided by the "cultural workforce".

Is "culture", then, now merely a commodity, to be bought, sold or bartered, with no uniqueness or attachment to place. There is certainly no place in this concept of "culture" for those who have protested at the outrageous treatment of Elspeth King (*ArtWork* was amongst the first), have criticised Glasgow's Glasgow (*ArtWork*, again, wears that battle honour with pride) and exposed the secret plans for a commercial leisure development on Flesher's Haugh.

On the contrary, they have been singled out for "special attention" by the McSaatchis in the City Chambers. Once again, this issue of one of Scotland's longest-running and most widely circulated arts magazines carries no "culture" advertising from either Strathclyde Region or Glasgow District Council. You may think this shameful. I do

too. But to the small town booster, with his Chamber of Commerce suit, Rotarian tie and Masonic handshake, to question is near to treason.

All the issues we have tackled this year have been important, and remain so. But the resulting smoke and dust has obscured an even more important question, about which there was never any significant debate in the compliant Scottish press. Yet it is fundamental. What is the "culture" that is being "celebrated" in 1990?

Pat Lally, for instance, in one of his increasingly preposterous interventions in the King debate, told us that his own "favourite anti-éliteist memory" was of the Big Day, and how "any Glaswegian, rich or poor, could have a great day out, sustained by a packet of sandwiches and a bottle of Irn Bru if that was all they could afford." Murray Ritchie, in the *Glasgow Herald*, also evoked it as one of his treasured memories of 1990, along with the Sinatra debacle.

The notion of "culture", if I remember my Matthew Arnold correctly, once implied some

striving towards excellence, although the original purity of that concept has now been so diluted as to become almost meaningless. Yet it is not wholly reactionary to believe that those who awarded Glasgow the title after cities like Florence, Paris and Amsterdam did not have "yoof culture" or "pop culture" uppermost in their minds.

What has been so depressing about 1990 is that there has been no attempt to make it a showcase for Scottish culture. Instead we have had a ragbag of touring international acts foisted on us by rootless cosmopolitans, the mercenaries of the arts circuit, recruited to "do" 1990 for us (if this is 1990, it must be Glasgow). That, rather than "racism" lies behind the reaction against so many top arts jobs going to outsiders (of whatever nationality).

So the main charge to be laid against 1990 is that it has had no theme that would either give it coherence or make it relevant to Scotland. Glasgow's Glasgow, it is now clear, was

disciples who hang out in the Scotia Bar, cannot be blamed for that particular catastrophe. Had it been wonderful, the ubiquitous ads (now guaranteed cash flow for the local press) would have been unnecessary, and there would have been queues along Argyle Street. Instead it was a ragbag of artefacts presented with a cacophony of noise in a claustrophobic space that will make an ideal whisky bond or political prison after November.

With hindsight (and hindsight, as somebody once said, is probably as valuable as foresight, since it does include a few facts), the decision to mount a year-long festival appears increasingly insane. Glasgow, has manifestly failed to sustain it. Even the jazz and folk festivals, bizarrely scheduled against each other in the same week) were loss-makers, and the tiny audiences for the dance and world theatre seasons (the latter coinciding with the Glasgow Fair, when the city was half empty), were elo-

"So the main charge to be laid against 1990 is that it has had no theme that would either give it coherence or make it relevant to Scotland."

largely an ego trip by its self-styled "founder" Douglas Clelland, which has renovated, at vast public expense, arches beneath a railway station in a run-down area of the city. What is perplexing is how so many members of Glasgow's arts establishment, like Professor Andy Macmillan, of the Mackintosh School of Art, became so deeply involved (though he has now reportedly resigned from the company).

Elspeth King and Worker's City, the elderly band of Harry McShane's

quent testimony to yet more bungled planning. And yet, scarcely more than a year ago, there was genuine excitement about 1990. The People's Palace were going to mount an important exhibition of the stained glass work of Daniel Cottier, and Michael Donnelly had been to research it in the States. There was to be a Bud Neill exhibition with a book. There were ambitious plans for six new environmental sculptures, including one by David

red out' by the Year another hard look

Mach on the piers of an old bridge across the Clyde. There was talk of a city arts commission. None of it ever happened.

There were never plans, as far as I know, for the big epoch-making exhibition of the twentieth century Scottish art, with an impact comparable to that of *The Vigorous Imagination* some years back. We never saw evidence of any effort to seek out excellence in any field of Scottish artistic activity and build round it. It is somehow typical that only a couple of days after James Kelman, so recently short-listed for the Booker Prize, was being reviled in print by the "depute director of festivals", I should have met a French film crew on the plane who were coming to Glasgow to film a Kelman script for Channel 4.

What we got instead were the usual run of travelling exhibitions that would probably have arrived in any year. They all had one thing in common. They were all infinitely better than the ghastly *Great British Art Show* that reopened the McLellan Galleries. I particularly enjoyed the Pissarro at the Burrell and the fauves (the Sound of Colour) at Kelvingrove. But there was no catalogue for the latter, I was told, because "we couldn't get a sponsor". Yet it would surely only have cost two or three brainstorming "lunches".

But there is also much complacency and self-delusion about. The best exhibition I have seen anywhere this year was just down the road in Manchester last month. They had managed to bring over a breath-taking collection of early twentieth century portraits from Soviet museums as part of the city's Olympic Festival. The great European exhibitions have included the Van Gogh in Amsterdam and the Velasquez

in Madrid. So far, 1990 delivered Glasgow little more than hype.

Even the debates that Glasgow thinks its own are, I am sad to report, going on elsewhere. In the next year or two, the National Museum of Labour History in Manchester will move to the Castlefield complex of pay-on-entry museums next to Granada's TV Tour, one of the most lucrative and successful historical fakes (Coronation Street) in Britain. Will it be pay-on-entry too? Watch this space.

Another rerun of the People's Palace contro-

"What has been so depressing about 1990 is that there has been no attempt to make it a showcase for Scottish culture."

versy, which is about "real" history versus the heritage industry, is tucked away at the southern tip of Scotland, at Whithorn in Galloway. Here archaeologists have so far dug up 1500 skeletons from the 4000 or so buried in the old priory graveyard. Here too, the heritage industry is in full swing.

Tee-shirted guides (the tee-shirt with logo is the badge of the heritage industry) conduct the paying customers over the site, where you may occasionally, I am told, see two or even three bodies huddled together in a grave before they are sent off to the pathologists. The ghoulish spectacle, for such it undoubtedly is, is mystifyingly and shamefully supported by the Church of Scotland. You

can even see the dig at a "family evening", complete with "games and barbecue," or buy a kit to "build your own human skeleton".

I was unable to discover whether the "Whithorn Dig", signposted for miles around, has published any serious academic research. A tee-shirt told me a leaflet at the cash-desk was "just to pull in the punters", but an "interim report" might be available. Unfortunately it was locked in a cupboard, and the keyholder was at lunch.

All there is to see now is a field of stones, full of more tee-shirts and denim shorts looking busy. Many of those born and brought up in the area, feel they are witnessing a gigantic sacrilege. "We destroyed their cathedral in the Reformation, and now we are digging up their graveyard," one told me. How familiar it all sounded after the Elspeth King affair.

The Year of Culture is not yet over, of course. As I write, television ads exhort me to buy tickets for the Bolshoi at the SECC, "the experience of a lifetime". Bill Bryden's ship has still to be built. The concert hall has still to open, and the best may yet be to come. But many Glaswegians are, I imagine, already "cultured out".

They are confused about the purpose and direction of an event that seems to equate quantity with quality, and in which the gulf between the promise and the performance has often been breathtaking. Many are outraged by the arrogance of Pat Lally and his politburo (the YoC advisory committee has become a joke, and few of its members, I understand, now bother to attend).

For once the old hack's question, "But what does this mean for Scotland?" has some relevance.

ArtWork editorial comment

East-West thaw

THERE was a time when culture mania was at its height when it seemed that the hyping of Glasgow could begin to do damage to the Edinburgh Festival. There was even some mad talk of moving Edinburgh's event lock, stock and hoghead down the M8 to the City of Culture. Little is now heard of that one and Glasgow has plenty cultural problems of its own without looking east for more.

Early reports from the east seem to show that ticket sales at Edinburgh this year give cause for some satisfaction. Such a success has certainly been worked for and is deserved. As part of the plug-Glasgow campaign it became fashionable to belittle the achievements of Edinburgh - both its official Festival and its wonderful, vast, sprawling Fringe, not to mention the many fringes of the Fringe. But the Festival is something of which the whole of Scotland can be proud.

As we have argued many times in these columns, Glasgow could and should have brought a totally new dimension to the world of the arts. The ground work had been done over many years - starting, if one is to be fair about it, with Toshie and his mates. But as we have never tired of pointing out (and continue to do in the columns next to these) Glasgow's year of culture has failed to build on the unique qualities of West of Scotland culture that exist and would have transformed the Year of Culture concept.

If the truth be told Europe's Capital of Culture idea is probably as yawn-inducing a notion as that pinnacle of Euro-culture the Eurovision Song Contest. Glasgow could have changed all that, but didn't because it fell in love with the publicity machine.

Edinburgh, on the other hand, long used to existing on near-starva-

tion rations has managed to nurture its Festival through endless years of famine.

Sure things could be much better: a perennial slapstick act has been the farce of the non-appearing opera house. There is still an unfortunate aura of social exclusivity about the Festival Society concept and an unhappy complacency. But it works and, after approaching half a century, it's still there.

The lesson for Glasgow to learn is that it must develop its own cultural identity by building on its strengths. This may mean some spoonfuls of humble pie for the hype-masters, but it would be worth swallowing. The world has still to hear Glasgow's real message.

MID-AUGUST marks the first anniversary of the dispute which led to the sacking of virtually the whole journalistic staff of Aberdeen's two newspapers, the *Press and Journal* and the *Evening Express*.

The hope of proprietors in such circumstances is that, with the passage of time, the public will forget about the dispute (if they ever noticed it) and that eventually life (and sales) will return to normal. The *P & J* dispute, however, is different. With the odd dishonourable exception, local authorities throughout Scotland have kept up a remarkably solid boycott of the advertising columns of the papers. Whatever management may say this must have hurt.

What is surprising is that few readers have made the connection between the Aberdeen papers and others under the same control, *The Scotsman* and the bravely named *Scotland on Sunday*, which though it likes to refer to itself as 'The Independent Voice of Scotland', in fact like the *P & J* is masterminded from New York.

The independent voice of Scotland indeed!

SCOTLAND ON SUNDAY 19.8.90

Cost of culture city shocks Labour leaders

A THREAT to Glasgow District Council's Labour leadership is looming in the wake of a leaked report which discloses that the council will be obliged to subsidise the 1990 cultural budget to the tune of more than £13m.

Senior figures in the city's Labour Party confirmed yesterday that Pat Lally, the council's Labour leader, is expected to face a formal challenge for the leadership of the council's Labour group in the next few months.

Among those who are thought to be considering a challenge to Lally's leadership is Jean McFadden, the city treasurer and recently-elected president of the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities. Last night McFadden said any talk of a challenge to the leadership came as a surprise to her.

The leaked report, due to be considered at a council committee this week, puts the cost to the council of underwriting the 1990 celebrations at more than £13.5m. Two years ago, the council ear-marked £15m of the city's £45m arts and culture fund for 1990, but until the last few days the authorities had only expected to have to underwrite the costs of the celebrations to the sum of £8m.

The costs have risen because the original projections were made before major presentations, including the troubled

By Steve Briggs

"Glasgow's Glasgow" exhibition, the Bolshoi Opera, Frank Sinatra and the Big Day, were planned. They have required subsidies of about £3.7m, £1.15m, £.9m and £1m respectively.

Although the scale of the projected deficit has not surprised Lally or senior figures within the council's festivals unit, the department taking primary responsibility for the year's cultural celebrations, other senior Labour figures are angry at what they claim is another example of Lally and his associates running the city as a personal fiefdom.

The latest revelation is expected to add considerably to the mounting tensions within the city's Labour Party, coming in the wake of other damaging public disputes.

Lally maintained that the council was not run in a secretive manner and said it was insulting to his colleagues to suggest they nodded through decisions without understanding them.

A party officer said last night that there was a growing feeling in party circles that the administration had lost control of 1990 but was refusing to come clean about it. "This announcement will focus people's minds on the idea that the row over the costs of 'Glasgow's Glasgow' are simply symptomatic of the way that the year

of culture is being run," he said.

John Young, Glasgow district's Tory group leader, said that Pat Lally's days were numbered. Young said he believed that the £13m loss was far less than if money from departmental accounts, such as cleansing and parks and recreation, was taken into account.

"There should have been a proper financial monitoring team in place from the very beginning. Other cities which have held the title kept the events and costs controllable."

The dispute has come at the end of a week in which the spectre of the Edinburgh Festival has overshadowed Glasgow, bringing to the fore the age-old rivalry between the cities. During the week the festival director, Frank Dunlop, claimed that it had only been his personal intervention that had prevented the Bolshoi Opera cancelling its Scottish visit.

He claimed that his hopes of cultural co-operation between the two cities had been dashed by the emergence of a "we've got to be better" approach by Glasgow's cultural officials.

But last night Bob Palmer, Glasgow's festivals unit director, dismissed Dunlop's assertions as "pure fantasy". He maintained that Glasgow's 1990 organisers had deliberately chosen not to stage any major events during the three weeks of the Edinburgh Festival.

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GL HERALD 20/8/90

The price of art

SOME of the costs of the Glasgow's Year of Culture are beginning to show themselves. Together with uncollected revenue from poll tax, they are contributing to an increasingly bleak financial picture for the district council. These difficulties will be reflected in substantial poll-tax increases next year which will simply compound the problems being caused by this wretched levy. The organisers of the non-payment campaign should reflect that the victims will not be the Government but those members of society of modest means who do pay. It is unlikely that this Government will be deflected or that it will bail out Scottish local government, whose leaders last week issued grave warnings about their financial position but whose political sympathies do not on the whole make them prime candidates for Government intercession.

Nor is there much hope that central funds will be available to moderate the losses being incurred in Glasgow during the year of culture. A contingency sum set aside by the council to guarantee ticket sales seems likely, contrary to expectations, to be almost completely consumed. Financial controls in the festivals unit do not seem to have been sufficiently stringent, and some fairly substantial misjudgments have taken place. The most notable examples of this were the World Theatre Season — it was a serious embarrassment that so distinguished a group of companies commanded only paltry audiences but it was also an act of unbridled optimism to mount the season in July when Glasgow takes its holiday; the Sinatra Concert, which was an outstanding artistic success but caused the council, in the jargon of the impresario, to "take a bath"; and the

community programmes posited on the patronising idea that if the punters won't come to art, art should go to the punters. The exhibition Glasgow's Glasgow is also showing a shortfall in revenue, although ticket-pricing policy was perhaps initially to blame for this; the damage in terms of public esteem was made worse by the controversies over the People's Palace.

Ambition, then, appears to have been accompanied by some degree of misjudgment. That does not mean that the year of culture is to be judged a failure. By many criteria it has already been an outstanding success. The council has commissioned Dr John Myerscough to prepare a study of the Year's total economic impact, and there is no doubt that it has already been highly significant. Glasgow's reputation has been greatly improved in the world at large and it now has greater hope that its transformation into a service and tourism centre can be carried forward.

In his previous study*, Dr Myerscough found that the arts are a potent economic stimulus and a much more cost-effective method of job creation than any other of public-revenue spending. Nevertheless, there must be some caveats. The unfavourable financial date, and the difficulties which will squeeze the arts in next year. That would be a pity for the arts infrastructure of the legacies sustained, if at all, by this annus mirabilis.

*The Economic Policy Study

The city of culture

So "the City of Culture is being milked dry", according to James Kelman ("Storm in the Palace", 3 August). Of course it isn't, though it's hardly surprising to us to read yet another misinformed and extremist interpretation of Glasgow's European Cultural Capital year from Mr Kelman. He and his so-called "Workers City" associates seem determined not to learn about the true nature, significance or objectives of this extremely important and successful year.

Despite the fact that they care to know nothing of the principles, methods and aims of this office and the working relationships it has established with over 400 Glasgow arts and cultural organisations in the last three years; despite the fact that 1990 has so far succeeded because of the hard work, determination and skill of hundreds of their fellow-artists and cultural workers living in communities here; despite the fact that 1990 has delivered an extraordinary capital legacy for Glaswegians in the shape of new and refurbished buildings and facilities for the arts; and despite the fact that its impact on the city's confidence, its image, its future vision for the arts and their development is beyond anything in the experience of a British city, they insist on rubbishing the entire exercise from a position of self-inflicted ignorance.

It's self-inflicted, since of all the factual errors contained in Mr Kelman's piece, the allegations of Glasgow district council's secrecy over 1990 funding and management are the most serious. They must be flatly refuted. He talks of "revelations concerning the actual costs of European Cultural Capital year". There have been no such "revelations". The council declared, publicly and properly over two years ago, that it had set aside a special fund of up to £15 million to support the year and its preparations. 1990 remains within that budget. Subsequently, all grant aid, support and assistance from that fund has been publicised openly upon council's approval. Kelman's claim that "as much as 10 per cent of the general services budget has been 'milked' from every [his italics] council department in Glasgow except housing to pay for the 'cultural celebration'" is a fantasy.

Unlike the gigantic corporate effort which 1990 has inspired among the arts and cultural and business communities, Kelman and his tiny

group of colleagues have no democratic base upon which to substantiate their often insulting statements and interpretations. Glasgow's Glasgow is dismissed as "a critical disaster". Is it? An exhibition whose nature and scale has never been attempted in Britain? An exhibition which has just attracted its 269,000th visitor in under four months, putting it among the top 7 per cent of Europe's museums and galleries? Hailed as a great achievement by a large number of influential and experienced critics, and by 97 per cent of the visitors in an independent exit survey?

The author, quoted as saying that Glasgow's writers and critics were "an embarrassment to this city and all of its cultural workforce", said nothing of the kind and James Kelman knows it. But the persistent uninformed criticism of the 1990 programme by the Workers City group is. Because as far as possible we have shared the authorship of the programme with the organisations and people who made the title possible in the first place. If that is calumnied, without any reference to what is really happening, the city's artistic reputation is too.

Of course James Kelman is rightly concerned about larger political issues of accountability and risks to Glasgow's cultural heritage, but does he seriously believe that 1990 is also a threat to them? Do sweeping assumptions about demolition in the Gorbals, the redevelopment of Glasgow Green, the sale of assets for capital receipts (needed to help protect the city from the poll tax and Thatcher's attack on the power of local government), the modest charges needed to help fund the (newly refurbished for 1990) McLellan Galleries' exhibitions which wouldn't otherwise happen, the ineptitude and cultural illiteracy which he detects within this office—do these add up to some anti-socialist, undemocratic conspiracy? Of course not—they're simply lumped together in an attempt to thicken up watery protests. And that, ultimately, is the real tragedy. Instead of keeping alive the grand, angry tradition of eloquent dissent with which this city fired the whole country's labour movement for at least a generation, they, a great Scottish author among them, resort to mere pamphleteering from a Glasgow pub.

*Robert Palmer, Director
Neil Wallace, Deputy Director
Glasgow 1990 Festivals Office*

pendent tabloid

that the NSS at last, if only it, accepts that the *Mail* is not one of Mrs Thatcher's "tabloid trusties" (17 August). "tabloid trusties", you tell us, have failed to ask why, "such a grave turn in events", has not led to the Parliament.

For some of your readers, previous references to the *unday* in your journal, have left on the subject, may I mention our leading article of 19 "The phrase 'parliamentary party' jumps as easily to the Margaret Thatcher as do the any more fares please?" to a doctor... Dissenters do exist with different views from their benchers. As the lives of soldiers are at stake, they not rve to be heard but must be let's hear no more talk liamentary sovereignty Government or its rs, not to mention the ont bench, until we have ore evidence that they elieve it... Our Parliament Let the Government think "

teven
e Mail on Sunday
V8

er and exploited

umber of reactions to your male prostitutes ("Boys' ies", 24 August). First, I rprised that one confessed rviewer that he votes atcherism and prostitution ly compatible, as ism reduces everything, an relationships, to ties to be bought and sold ated by market forces. ticle challenged the ical image of the male e, usually the rent boy, as a ho takes to prostitution e could not otherwise Such an image is indeed a e over-simplification; so is e exploited prostitute (rent seur, escort model, etc) and iting punter (always d as old). From time to time past 20 years I have bought lways from men younger elf. I frequently felt that I exploited one.

The punter-prostitute relation epitomises the supremacy of economic values over human values.

While the article displayed a certain sympathy for the "rent boys" interviewed, and even admiration for the enterprising spirit of the young Tory voter, it reflected the contempt that society (and, frequently, prostitutes) holds for the buyers of sex who are dehumanised as "punters".

Leon Perks
Address supplied

Into the 21st century

Having enjoyed two weeks' holiday in Benidorm, it is only on my return that I have seen James Kelman's latest farrago regarding Glasgow 1990. Unfortunately, I must inform NSS readers that his account of Glasgow is a piece of fiction of which Jeffrey Archer would be proud.

Saloon-bar Stalinists certainly have their place in Glasgow's history—but in the past, not the future. There are virtually no depths of distortion or inaccuracy to which they will not stoop.

Bob Palmer, Neil Wallace and Julian Spalding have already responded to some of Kelman's inventions. Here are a few more facts—like the officials, I would not complain about well-founded criticism, but I must object to wilful untruths. For a start, the People's Palace never was a "semi-derelict building", and it never will be under a Labour administration. In fact, we have recently spent £2.6 million on improving the complex. Moreover, the success of the People's Palace is not due to the work of any individual or individuals, but is the result of the council's policy of investment in social history.

Second, there has been no curtailment of free speech in the City Chambers: it has always been the case—and quite rightly so—that the established decision-making process should not be undermined by unauthorised statements to the press. All that is required is collective responsibility from councillors and professionalism from officials.

Third, Fleshers' Haugh is not a piece of hallowed greenery, but an area of outdated and little-used gravel football pitches which the administration has a manifesto commitment to redevelop. The proposals under consideration would

replace these with a £40 million leisure development which will be one of the finest in the United Kingdom, providing some 400 jobs in an area crying out for them. The intention is to provide facilities, including all-weather sports pitches, for men and women of all ages.

Fourth, the decision to demolish Queen Elizabeth Square in the Gorbals is supported by a large majority of local residents: if Kelman lived in these dreadful flats (or even visited them), he would agree.

I could go on. Many of us in Glasgow have devoted our political lives to the fight against poverty and deprivation in the city. I was born in the Gorbals and now sit as a councillor for Castlemilk, so I do not need Kelman to tell me how much still remains to be achieved. However, I am proud—as are most Glaswegians—that our city has attained through the efforts of its people an international reputation, not just as an artistic centre, but as a place where we get things done.

We make no apology for milking 1990, in the interests of our people, for all the development and investment that we can: to fail to do so would be to turn our backs on a golden opportunity. And we will have no truck with those who would reject the possibilities of the twenty-first century for their own version of what was in reality an inglorious past for working people.

Pat Lally
City Chambers
Glasgow

Glasgow's radical past

It is not entirely unexpected that the first people to rush into print attacking James Kelman's excellent article "Storm in the Palace" (3 August), should be a trio of officials who have a vested interest in the outcome of Glasgow's year of culture.

The letters from Spalding, Palmer and Wallace read like brochures from Saatchi and Saatchi, but the facts are that Glasgow's year as City of Culture has dismally failed to give any prominence to Glasgow's proud socialist and radical past. It has even omitted or played down any reference to Burns's or McDiarmid's association or ties with Glasgow. All this took place long before the shameful treatment of Elspeth King, the curator of the People's Palace. In contrast, Mr Mark O'Neil, the newly

appointed curator of social history in Glasgow, acquired an international reputation overnight despite the fact that his only previous post was keeper at Glasgow's smallest but wealthiest museum in Springburn.

One of the many questions people are asking in Glasgow is how the import of megastars like Pavarotti and Sinatra enhances Glasgow's cultural image and why, when Glasgow is awash with singers and musicians of all kinds, we need to import buskers from the Continent. It is to be expected that the professional carpet baggers who follow most festivals should fail to understand what motivates writers like James Kelman. When the year of culture draws to a close they will look to another gravy train and move on; already kites have been flown in the direction of Edinburgh and Dublin.

The real tragedy of Glasgow's year of culture is that it has passed by the thousands of people in the schemes like Easterhouse, Castlemilk and Drunchapel. The only important letter to them is their Giro. Of what relevance is the year of culture to them?

Hugh Savage
Chairman, Friends of the People's
Palace
Glasgow

Responsible disposal

It was sad to see Jolyon Jenkins's cynical view of "corporate greening" ("Who's the Greenest?", 17 August).

Sadder, too, to note the basic mistakes of fact: Rechem, he reports, "tried to import the Karen [sic] B's load of highly toxic PCBs from Canada".

Rechem was publicly acknowledged as having nothing to do with the *Karin B*. This vessel, with its untouchable cargo of toxic wastes, was a prime example of what can happen when such wastes are not responsibly managed and disposed of.

It is true that, on a quite separate occasion last summer, Rechem was stopped from importing a consignment of PCBs from Canada, a fact which attracted sensational coverage in the popular press.

This ignored the fact, however, that the best practicable environmental option for getting rid of PCBs is to destroy them by high-temperature incineration (which is Rechem's speciality). Indefinite

Shades of Cook County

FEW Labour leaders in Glasgow can have stirred the public interest quite so much as Pat "make it happen" Lally.

While it is the lot of most politicians to attract admiration and hatred in varying measure during their years of engagement with the electorate, this south-side survivor has made an absolute speciality of plunging into controversy and emerging, sooner or later, with that disarming smile beaming the question "Crisis? What Crisis?"

Thereafter the debate can often centre on whether there is a crisis rather than the pressing issue of the moment.

Whether he likes it or not, he is increasingly perceived as a Cook County power broker in the classic Chicago mould — dispensing patronage, forging complex alliances and coalitions within a ruling Labour Group that is little better than a loose confederation of warring tribes.

He may well have earned this reputation because of past activities or it may have been imposed on him by his Labour Party enemies (sorry, colleagues).

But as every politician knows, public perception invariably transcends factual reality — and that is why so few people believe his repeated denials that he had any involvement in the Elspeth King affair.

Of course, he had no direct involvement in the appointment procedures for filling the newly created post of keeper of social history. What is more difficult to prove or deny is the "nod and a wink" involvement, or even the subtle creation of an atmosphere of disapproval, resulting in an imperceptible influence being brought to bear on the interviewing panel.

Save that they were hopelessly insensitive to the prevailing mood in George Square, the panel must surely have been aware that a certain candidate for the post was not being smiled upon by the leadership.

In essence, Councillor Lally is being accused of a non-involved kind of involvement, if that doesn't sound too Irish.

Interestingly, Councillor Lally gave credence to the rumours himself with his comments on Michael Donnelly, deputy curator at the People's Palace under Elspeth King. This followed Mr Donnelly's ferocious and wide-ranging denouncement in a Glasgow

The financial nightmare of the Glasgow's Glasgow exhibition and the linked controversy of the Elspeth King affair have focused critical attention on the city's year of culture strategy and the leadership style of Councillor Patrick Lally. With rumours about the possibility of a palace revolution at the City Chambers,

JOHN MacCALMAN

profiles the remarkable Labour leader who has survived crises throughout his remarkable political career with a resilience that has astonished friend and foe alike.



■ PAT LALLY: "Whether he likes it or not, he is increasingly perceived as a Cook County power broker in the classic Chicago mould — dispensing patronage, forging complex alliances and coalitions within a ruling Labour Group that is little better than a loose confederation of warring tribes."

Herald Outsider article of the Labour leader and municipal Labour politics. Councillor Lally's suggestion that Michael Donnelly might benefit from "a change of environment" drew yet another hostile response from the Elspeth King camp. Mr Donnelly has since paid for his outburst by being dismissed from the council service (an appeal is pending) although some suspect him of an indecent hankering after martyrdom.

The question on many lips over recent months is "Why should the leader of a great city council find himself so closely associated in the public mind with an appointment of moderate ranking?"

Given that Councillor Lally strenuously denies any involvement, the question may appear academic. However, the question will not go away.

Somehow the appointment has crystallised an apparent conflict between the widely acclaimed People's Palace operation and the European City of Culture extravaganza, particularly the financially disastrous Glasgow's Glasgow exhibition.

Not noted in some quarters for his strategic vision, Councillor Lally may be driven by the notion that the year of culture could well be the major happening in his term of leadership and could, therefore, earn him a place in the history books.

Clearly the hideous publicity surrounding the King affair, as well as the over the future of Glasgow the costs of the year of culture, pose a threat to his fitting memorial to the

Even before the heady culture, Elspeth King and Donnelly were a constant. Councillor Lally, with stated complaints of the for social history and the ace. In the eyes of the the People's Palace duo, unmanageable. Ironically, the case when dealing people.

Gentlemilk partnership gets

in the City Chambers



ed as a Cook County power broker in the classic Chicago mould "

damaging the Elspeth controversy w Green and lture, collec dream of a ally years. year of cul nd Michael iritation to eir publicly nder-funding People's Pal- tablishment, ere virtually , that is often ith talented

Always jealous of the council's track record of spending on the People's Palace, senior councillors and officials developed a smouldering resentment towards the curator and her depute. Even when the Palace was enjoying national and international acclaim, it irked the establishment that the success was invariably linked to Ms King and Mr Donnelly rather than the council.

Their disenchantment with the King-Donnelly axis probably came to a head just before the opening of the ill-fated Glasgow's Glasgow exhibition. It appears the museums management at Kelvingrove thought the exhibition so poor that it

was recommended for cancellation.

When this was refused by higher authority, Elspeth King was approached and asked of she could rescue it. She took a look, decided the project was indeed "a turkey" and backed off quickly. Some of her supporters feel she should have taken the opportunity offered and used it as a lever in support of her own position.

One supporter said: "Elspeth and Michael often took the moral high ground, and they were the only ones there."

On the other hand it irks many in the Labour movement, and the city Labour Party in particular, to witness the treatment being handed out to Ms

King and Mr Donnelly. At a recent city party meeting Councillor Lally was under a lot of pressure over the Elspeth King affair, Glasgow Green and other issues of cultural and ideological value. It was clear he was very much isolated.

In fact, it is no secret that the leader adopts a cavalier, if not contemptuous, attitude towards the city party where, in turn, he is deeply disliked by many of the activists.

He has no power base there. He has no real profile in national Labour politics. However, it is a different story within the Labour Group in George Square where at present there appears to be no alternative to him, assuming that city treasurer Jean McFadden remains unattracted by the possibility of winning back the leadership she lost to him four years ago. She is the only one capable of mustering the support necessary to oust him.

Patronage and personal friendships forged over many years are crucial for the Lally power base. But another important factor is the double life led by Labour councillors.

Most back benchers have one profile in the party branch or constituency Labour Party and another reserved for their City Chambers activities. Locally they may condemn the leadership, or distance themselves from certain controversial or unpopular policies, but inside the City Chambers they will sit dumb and vote with the leadership, perhaps hoping for a spiritually uplifting conference in Bournemouth, Brighton, Eastbourne or some other popular hunting ground for the servants of a hard-pressed electorate.

Actually it's quite a nice balance. Everybody inside the system knows it goes on. The back bencher maintains his local credibility, the leadership gets its unpopular policies through the council, and everybody is happy. As for the electorate, they would only be unhappy if told about it — so why tell them?

A further factor in favour of Councillor Lally is the fear of something worse. Better the devil you know...

Given the circumstances, there appears little chance of Councillor Lally being toppled, should that be considered desirable. It might be tempting fate, but one might venture to say that he is virtually unassailable.

STABILISED MORTGAGES

A sad stumble on the

Kenneth Roy's

SMALL COUNTRY



ON the day I went looking for the Glasgow yuppie, a species that proved as elusive as snakes in Ireland, the first person that I bumped into — or rather tumbled over — was a man stretched flat out on a pavement opposite Paddy's Market. He was lying on his back in a puddle, stiff and motionless, like some long-abandoned rag doll. My first thought was that he was dead.

Such was his condition, it was difficult to tell his age: late 50s or early 60s, perhaps. He wore wretched clothes that might have come from the flea market across the way. His trousers were pulled up and for a few seconds I was transfixed by the sight of his legs, as emaciated as a famine victim's. I crouched over him until I was satisfied that he was still breathing. There were three empty beer cans by his side. Super, the drink was called. Super.

A woman, drunk but vertical, was pacing the pavement in a state of great agitation and making little sense. She might have been telling me to leave

her friend alone, just as the rest of the world seemed content to do. For all around us people were busy minding their own business: from the rag and bone merchants of the Briggait ("Phone for Social Security Estimates") to Saturday morning consumers, safe and warm behind a wheel, on their way to the glass-encased St Enoch shopping centre with its 750-space car park.

It was barely 11am, but already the car-park was packed and the traffic along Bridgegate Street had crawled almost to a halt. Motorists gazed out at our abject little group, some with mild curiosity, others — the majority — quite blankly.

"Defend Elspeth King," proclaimed Worker's City posters all over the neighbourhood. "Defend the People's Culture." At that moment, confronted by the indifference of the passing crowd, I had had enough of Glasgow museum-keepers and the people's bloody culture. What sort of culture is it in which a man is left unconscious, possibly dying, on a pavement?



The search for the lost yuppie loses momentum

After much dithering, I asked one of the car park attendants to telephone the police. He agreed but I didn't believe him. Eventually, I dialled 999 myself. Within a few minutes, a traffic cop appeared on the scene and parked his motorbike outside Paddy's Market. He said he knew about the man on the pavement, I was not to worry about him, they would "get around to him". He added

laconically that a woman had been murdered in the lane in the early hours of the morning and a mobile incident unit was expected at any moment.

I looked disbelievingly into the unmarked and crowded lane, which stretched at least 100 yards down to the Clyde. Squint-eyed wives, living proof that in the midst of death there is commerce, scavenged the stinking heaps for cast-off clothes, popping the selecte

e elusive yuppie trail

STEPHEN MANSFIELD



at the Scotia Bar

items into black bin-liners. A record was playing in the distance. *Roses are red, my love, violets are blue.* Dirty mags named *Readers' Wives* were on sale at the entrance. Defend the people's culture . . .

With the arrival of the mobile incident unit, a woman from Paddy's Market accosted me. What was up, she demanded to know. When I told her about the murder, she said that God, it was getting worse.

Then I told her about the man on the pavement. "Oh, him," she said. "He's just a wino." I wondered if she knew him. "Of course not," she replied indignantly and moved off smartly, taking her bulging bin-liner with her.

A young beat policeman was shaking the wino. "What's his name?" he asked his woman companion, who was now acutely distressed. "Eddie," she said. "But don't lift him, mister. Please don't lift him." Eddie stirred a little, and the policeman produced a notebook. "Do you want to go in, Eddie?" he asked kindly. "Don't lift him, mister, please don't lift him," the woman kept pleading. Unsure what was about to happen, and by then too shaken to want to know, I left in search of the nearest pub.

The nearest tolerable pub is called the Scotia Bar, around the corner in Stockwell Street. It rather fancies itself. It has notices outside boasting that it is the oldest pub in Glasgow, offers the biggest welcome in the world and is firmly established as the city's "writer's retreat". There is a doggerel verse painted on the wall, ending with the excruciating lines: "Yes, the spirit that's Glasgow upon the river flows/But it's heart will always be the Scotia Bar." No wonder local writers need a retreat.

Inside, there was no sign of

James Kelman or any of his cronies, who have done such an effective demolition job on the whole concept of Glasgow as a European citadel of culture. Perhaps it was a little early in the day for literary giants. However, there were petitions and pamphlets inviting the drinking classes to defend the small people's culture; and the welcome, if not the biggest in the world, was reasonably polite. Over strong coffee, with the thought of Eddie still troubling me, I quickly developed an immoderate dislike of the place.

By noon, the block of luxury flats overlooking the Clyde, where I had hoped to find the Glasgow yuppie, was at last open for inspection, 330 paces from Paddy's Market. Prices, starting at £81,950 for a two-bedroom ground-floor flat, rise to a penthouse grandeur of £184,450. "Outstanding residences offering an individual way of life," the sales brochure promises. "A new and exclusive residential area of the city." I was shown around a furnished show-flat with startling black and white decor — "shows what can be done," said the saleswoman bravely — and came face to face with two young men who were on the point of signing on the dotted line. But they were the only yuppies I met. The heart had gone out of my mission.

Days later, Eddie was still haunting me. I telephoned

Strathclyde Police's information office and said I wanted to know what happens to people like Eddie. Sergeant Alastair McKie explained that they are taken to hospital for a check-up, then detained in a police cell under constant surveillance until fit to be released. "Personally," he said, "I'd prefer to see these cases taken out of the criminal system. I'd like to see detoxification centres where people can be properly looked after by doctors."

After my visits to the Scotia Bar and the riverside luxury flats — Glasgow's alternative worlds, a choice between the devil and the deep blue sea — I returned briefly to the Bridgegate. Eddie and the woman had gone, leaving the empty cans of Super on the pavement. Meanwhile, on the other side of the street, Paddy's Market continued to bustle with foul-smelling life in the midst of a police investigation.

"Give me the ability to see good things in unexpected places," said a nun's prayer hanging in a shop window in Bridgegate Street. A few hundred yards on, in Glasgow's Roman Catholic cathedral, candles were lit and women sat bowed in prayer. How I envied them.

Last Monday, a young man appeared in private at Glasgow Sheriff Court charged with murder.

THE GLASGOW



HERALD

SCOTLAND'S NEWSPAPER

Established 1783

Culture or Clochemerle?

THE year of culture has been an undoubted triumph within the context of an economic strategy for Glasgow. That strategy, which goes back to the sixties, attempted to deal with Glasgow's decline as an industrial city, a process which has by no means finished: population and unemployment projections continue to suggest that Glasgow remains on a downward graph, no matter the brave talk. The areas of economic wealth and growth in Scotland are Grampian and Lothian, with centres of population increase in Inverness, Perth and the Stirling-Glasgow axis. The prospects for Glasgow without the very substantial public and private investment that has been made in it over a couple of decades would have been bleak, and that investment must be sustained in spite of short-term financial difficulties. Preparations are evidently being made to maintain the services of Mr Robert Palmer in 1991 in an upgraded version of the directorship of city halls. That is a move we should support, provided that satisfactory financial controls are also in place.

The allegation that the festivals unit has been an *impresariat* has sometimes had a grain of truth to it. Financial scrutiny, always essential in any creative field, has sometimes been weak. The world theatre season was a notable misjudgment, if not a historically praiseworthy. Nevertheless Mr Palmer has made an enormous contribution to the city and he deserves to be retained. Nor could he in any way be held responsible for the financial problems of Glasgow's theatres. The Labour Group leader, Mr Ian Lally, on the BBC's Focal Point last night, admitted that the city had bought a lesson. That much is common ground. What is not so clear is who should take the blame. Any attempt to make the accountants the scapegoats smells of passing the buck, especially since city councillors served on the operating board.

things will go wrong. It is more constructive to remember the things that have gone right. A partnership has arisen between the city council and the private sector which has become something of an example to others and has been rightly praised. To that process Councillor Lally has made a remarkable contribution. He has taken a potentially difficult Labour Group and, through the exercise of his undoubted political skills, imposed unanimity on it and driven it down entrepreneurial paths it might otherwise have been reluctant to tread. His personal drive and commitment were important factors in securing the completion of the Royal Concert Hall, by common consent the chief permanent legacy of 1990. He rules his group with a rod of iron. Hence the jokes about *Lally's Pally* and *Lallygrad*.

In two matters, we believe, Mr Lally's judgment has betrayed him. The first is the by now well-ventilated treatment of Elspeth King. It is still open to the city to recognise her remarkable contribution to its cultural life and to atone for its rebuff to her, and we hope that it will eventually have the generosity to do so. Mr Lally was not directly involved in the affair, but he was the presiding genius and the buck must stop with him. His second misjudgment arises from his attempt to remove Ian McCulloch's murals from the concert hall. We yield to no-one in our admiration of Mr Lally's political skills. Art guru he is not, even though he somewhat ludicrously invokes his honorary membership of the Royal Glasgow Institute of Fine Arts as evidence of his credentials. His own personal taste should be good enough. As art critics, we are all equal: we know what we like. But patronage has different obligations. If Mr Lally wants to be taken seriously as an impresario he should leave the murals where they are. The city of

Aspects of Strathclyde Murals

December 11.

Sir,— The announcement by the leader of the Labour Group on Glasgow District Council that he intends to have the Strathclyde Mural Paintings in the concert hall removed pains me personally as the artist responsible for these paintings.

Apart from this personal concern, however, this stated intention raises other and altogether much more important issues which go to the very heart of our democratic system of values which past generations in this city struggled and suffered so much to achieve.

The issue being raised here is one of censorship and suppression. Whether an individual likes or does not like these paintings has become irrelevant. Because they were made and installed as the result of a free, open, and democratic process, an attack upon them in the manner perpetrated by the leader of the Labour Group is an attack upon freedom itself.

To some this may seem to be an overstatement of the case and to them I would reply that book-burning and Fascism are historic bedfellows, but even when a book is burned there is always the possibility that another copy exists somewhere. Freedom of imagination and expression is not totally extinguished. This scenario does not pertain with visual work of art, in this case the Strathclyde Murals. If and when these paintings are removed an essential aspect of them will have been destroyed.

They were conceived and executed for the specific space they occupy and it was the specific intention of both the patrons — Strathclyde Regional Council — and the painter that they be hung in this most public of places to bear witness to the struggle of mankind for freedom: freedom in the first instance from blind nature; freedom from superstition; freedom from the brutalities attendant upon the doctrine of the divine right to rule; freedom from religious and political dogma; until at the end of the cycle man emerges dominant but rightly fearful of his future. That is what these paintings are about and that is what is being suppressed.

Do you as a citizen, heir to this system of values, feel so safe, so secure, so confident in the future of our institutions that you are prepared to allow one man's narrow vindictive, anti-democratic predilections dictate what you may or may not think? Let us be under no illusions about what these paintings represent. They may be decorative, as paintings should be; they may be passionate, as art can be; but the bottom line is that they are an attempt — not a final attempt, not the definitive attempt, but simply one artist's attempt — to give a visual form to the passions, and to the dramas which have formed these passions, which drive our society. At a very fundamental level they are about thinking about why we are here and what we are doing.

By suppressing these works, this one man is taking to himself the power to direct what we may or may not see, what we may or may not think. Such

GLASGOW
CULTURAL CAPITAL OF EUROPE

1990 has put Glasgow on the map for business

Garden Festival, a means to achieving those ends, not an end in itself. But how did it shape up to its own, more detailed objectives, listed here?

Raise the city's international profile: Glasgow enticed more than 1,000 foreign journalists to the city. Largely as a result, Pat Murray, of the British Tourist Authority, reports a significant increase in interest at its overseas offices. "Our offices putting out literature on Glasgow had to replenish the racks every day."

David Macdonald, director of Glasgow Action, the SDA-backed unit linking local authorities, industry and commerce, says that in the last month on trips abroad people kept approaching him for information about the city.

Anne Blanche Harriott, head of the European Commission's culture department in Brussels, said: "When we first came here in 1985, Glas-

hardly going to do any harm. It is harder to calculate how much new economic activity that generates. Two studies are under way, at Glasgow university and by John Myerscough, formerly of the Policy Studies Institute.

● *Verdict: jury still out.*

To generate inward investment: Ewan Marwick, chief executive of Glasgow chamber of commerce, said: "There is no doubt 1990 has put Glasgow on the map for business considering relocation."

Pat Lally, Labour leader of Glasgow and chairman of the key 1990 festive sub-committee, claims £2.5bn of inward investment either committed or in the pipeline. Glasgow Action put inward investment at a more conservative £1.8bn — still not bad.

Arts organisations have raised an extra £800,000 of new sponsorship this year and picked up a further £340,000 in central government incentive awards as a result, both record figures.

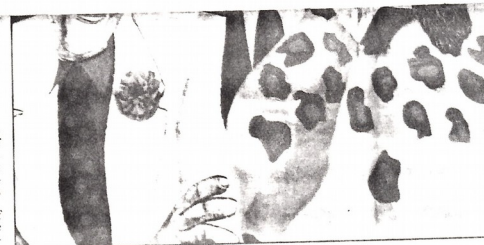
Total sponsorship income was £5.1m. In the city's original submission in 1986 to win the nomination, it thought it would do well to raise £1.5m.

● *Verdict: at least a useful boost*

Attract visitors to the city: The

Continued on page 2

Assessing the artistic worth — page 4



Stitched up: Bob Palmer, festivals director, and a tapestry of local entertainers

What the punters have to say

Joan Cullen, car sales in Farnham: I don't think the year of culture has made much difference to ordinary Glasgow people. It was good for the tourists, and I've noticed the number of foreign cars I've had in to clean. What I liked was the musicians and dancers in the streets.

Sandra McNulty, trainee, Drumchapel: It was probably a good advert for the city, but it must have cost an awful lot.

Heather Martin, shop assistant in Fraser's, Buchanan Street: It has been wonderful. I went to see Jock Tamson's Bairs at the Tramway, and really enjoyed it. I like something a wee bit different — avant garde, as you call it. (A friend) had never been in a theatre before

and didn't think it would be for him. He's still talking about that night now. But he didn't go back. I did, and I met Peter — Peter Brook — twice. What a lovely man he is, and clever, too.

Charlie Deans, upholsterer, Partick: I never heard too much about it, to tell you the truth. I don't think there was anything in it for a country and western man like myself.

Sammy, taxi driver, Springburn: I was one of the sceptics. I know everybody enjoyed the Garden Festival, but, between you and me, it didn't do a lot for our business. This 1990 has been different — lots of tourists, people going to more out-of-the-way places, and something for everybody.

Kelly-Marie, 7, a Brownie, 7, Rachell: I made a lantern at the Brownies and I went to the fireworks with it. That was absolutely brilliant, and everybody was singing, and my uncle Ian came to George Square from Canada.

Dave Wilson, painter and decorator, Govan: A waste of bloody time and money. The biggest con job since I don't know when. I'm not against culture, don't get me wrong. I like Pavarotti, but I was out of work — so I just couldn't go. And that was a con, by the way. Calls hisself the people's tenor! Then they had that Glasgow's Glasgow — nuff said. This city's just like one of these towns in the Westons — all front, nothing behind.

● Interviews — Mary Lockhart

A sad day for suspicious comrades

LAST month I was invited to write a paper on the condition of Scotland for the board of a large company. One paragraph reads: "The STUC is more highly regarded than the TUC is in England. The Guinness decision to invite Campbell Christie, the STUC's general secretary, to join the company's board acknowledged this."

That paragraph looks a bit silly now, after his comrades twisted his arm to make him withdraw. He had, it would seem, fallen over backwards in an attempt to make his acceptance agreeable to them.

He had promised to donate the bulk of his fees as a non-executive director to the STUC. This should have allayed the jealous suspicion that he was doing unfairly well as a result of his position in the trade union movement. The fact that he felt it necessary to make this offer is itself absurd.

It is not as if the STUC has ever demanded that its general secretary should devote himself only to STUC business. Christie himself has been active in the constitutional convention. According to his entry in Who's Who he is a director of Wildcat Theatre Company, the Scottish National Orchestra and the Theatre Royal Opera Company.

The GMB's disapproval was carried so far as a motion that he should lose his STUC job if he accepted the Guinness appointment, it



For years unions have moaned about their exclusion from company decision making, and ALLAN MASSIE is bewildered by Campbell Christie's forced withdrawal from the Guinness board

Christie got the message: "It was clear to me that with the representatives of a significant part of the workforce saying they were totally opposed to my being a member of the Guinness and United Distillers boards, there was no way in which the invitation to join could be taken up."

No doubt the hostility to Guinness evident in Scotland since its takeover of Distillers was influential. It is ironic, however, that Christie's withdrawal came the day after Sir Norman Macfarlane, chairman of United Distillers, had announced that the company was prepared "to do all it can to help to establish an opera house in Edinburgh". Since the departure of Ernest Saunders, Guinness has done a lot to dignify

the strength of its commitment to Scotland; and it is foolish not to recognise this.

The Christie saga is a dismal one. German and French jaws must drop in incredulity when they read of it. For years the trades unions have been complaining, with some reason, about their exclusion from decision making. They have told us they can contribute much to the formulation of political, economic, social and commercial policies. They have bombarded the government with recommendations on this matter and that. They have called for the adoption of the European Community's social charter, which provides for the representation of trades unions on company boards.

But when a company which plays an important part in the Scottish economy takes them at their word and invites the general secretary of the STUC onto its board, they throw up their hands in horror.

They may argue that Christie's appointment was cosmetic, but Macfarlane, who is still joint deputy chairman of Guinness as well as heading the United Distillers board, knows Christie's capabilities too well to suppose that his presence on the board would be purely ornamental. Of course they thought he

would be useful to Guinness and United Distillers — but could Christie's trade union colleagues not see that his appointment could do them some good also?

Suppose the Guinness invitation was no more than a bluff. What do you do with a bluff? You call it. That is a general rule of intelligent conduct. Not, however, one to which the STUC apparently subscribes.

Consequently, they have lost the opportunity to make an intelligent, trade union contribution to the policy of one of our largest companies, and to give substance to the often reiterated assertion that the unions should be involved. It is as depressing as the attempts by some Cheltenham Conservatives to block the adoption of a black parliamentary candidate. Both show how much of our society is stuck in harmful and outdated attitudes.

For years we have been assured that Scotland is different from England, that our tradition is consensual, not confrontational. Yet as soon as an offer which appears to recognise this argument is advanced, the trade union movement behaves like a suspicious dog. With ears flat on its head, it backs growling into its kennel. Sad.

Profile, page 6

Saatchi's survival plan hits City resistance . . .

Emily Bell

SAATCHI & Saatchi stepped back from the brink last week when the once-great advertising conglomerate presented its shareholders with refinancing proposals to guarantee its immediate future. But uncertainty still reigns as City analysts lobby investors to revolt against paying too high a price for salvaging the company.

Analysts at James Capel were the most vociferous in their condemnation of terms which they claim 'are unacceptable . . . and suit only one interest group; the banks'. The team of Neil Blackley and Quintin Price makes the unusual recommendation of 'lobby the company'. As the package requires approval across the board, the future of Saatchi lies in the hands of significant shareholders such as the Memphis-based

Southeastern Asset Management and bond holder Lord Rothschild.

'We certainly will not be recommending that shareholders vote in favour; it is a complete disaster,' says Price.

Saatchi's chief executive, Robert Louis-Dreyfus, spent four months formulating the proposals with bankers SG Warburg and US financiers Donaldson Lufkin & Jenrette. While the principal aim of removing a lethal £211 million Euroconvertible put, due to expire in 1993, was achieved, it is at the cost of all shareholders.

With almost four times as many shares in issue after the refinancing, the level of dilution is heavy and new preference share dividends may not be paid before 1994. Shares currently stand at 23p and could drop as low as 10p on the new valuation. Capel's analysts want to see a rejigged package, with

more preference shares and dividends paid immediately.

As a demonstration of faith in the company, some 200 top managers across the Saatchi empire will be asked to subscribe to a £5 million share issue underwritten by Dreyfus. It is widely believed Dreyfus will take £1 million of the issue.

Other analysts gave the proposals a better reception; Mark Shepperd of Phillips & Drew says that Dreyfus's bleak picture was at least 'realistic'. Another comments: 'It's really a case of confirming what everyone already knew — that the shares are effectively worthless — but at least this will give the company some sort of future, if not a very bright one.'

In addition to a reorganisation of share capital, the company is extending its loan facilities by some £20 million, and securing a short-term loan of £20 million from Donaldson

Lufkin & Jenrette. Stringent terms from DLJ, including a rising scale of interest and an arrangement fee of £350,000, suggest that the banks were able to apply the thumbscrews to Saatchi's management.

While Dreyfus has earned the respect of some quarters in the City, Charles and Maurice Saatchi's role in the company has been brought into question. More than one observer has noted that with the brothers each earning £310,000 a year (half their 1989 salaries), the company could now dispense with their services.

The City is unforgiving, and memories of the audacity which led to an abortive approach to the Midland Bank and a costly foray into US consultancies will not fade easily. But many in the industry still acknowledge the brothers' role in holding the agencies together.

The pair are now returning to



Saatchi: Back to work for Maurice (left) and Charles.

their roots. The opulent Berkeley Square offices are being swapped for more humble premises in Howland Street, which is connected to Saatchi's Charlotte Street agency.

According to a senior board director: 'Maurice has always retained close contact with major clients, but in the past six months he has become more active on both existing and new business. I don't think it would be too inaccurate to surmise that in the future that is where his energies will be concentrated.'

Maurice is close to major clients such as ICI, Procter & Gamble, BP and BA, while the

reclusive Charles is still consulted on major projects, such as last year's mammoth production for BA.

Another task Charles will have to tackle is that of selling off the 6 per cent of the Saatchi art collection which belongs to the company.

The company's core advertising businesses have remained healthy — particularly the Saatchi & Saatchi London agency. This weekend it won a £4 million account to launch British Rail's new Intercity 225 service next spring. Two weeks ago, it won a prestigious £7 million project from British Telecom.

WPP, the beleaguering services company, has confirmed that it is completing debt and negotiating interested bankers, writes

Reports that would be re-agreement with £315 million few weeks has as 'prema' believed that reduce W/ nants have

Late February shareholders' proposals. A price lan prospect financial is secur

Inter year a level and t nego for fo

Workers City For And Against

One of the leading lights in *Workers City*, **Brendan McLaughlin** outlines the creed of the association which was anti-European City Of Culture hype and previews 'Ten Days In May - A Revue.' At the Transmission Gallery ending on Friday May 10.

Throughout 1990 and Glasgow's reign as the European Capital of Culture, certain people refused to get involved opting instead to continue their work as they would do in any given year. However, events conspired to direct their creative skills in attempts to stop Glasgow from being misrepresented and ripped off.

They encouraged people not to be taken in by the vainglorious hype that characterised the year of culture.

They set themselves to publicly question much of the reasoning behind the presentation of Glasgow as a tame, pristine City posturing before would-be inward investors.

They defended Elspeth King and Michael Donnelly against the cynical persecution of Glasgow District Council and Julian Spalding; Director of Museums.

They exposed the outrageous cost to Glaswegians of the Glasgow's Glasgow exhibition and the attempts to sell off valuable public assets to pay for that and other misconceived fiascos.

They stopped Pat Lally, Bernard Connolly and Danny Crawford from selling off the Glasgow Green to private developers.

In 1991 they reclaim May-Day for the people and then stage a revue and an exhibition which will take place in the Transmission Gallery in King Street.

The revue will run from Wednesday 1st of May. For the rest of the month, there will be a visual exhibition interspersed with readings and discussions.

There will be sketches, poems, readings and songs from various members of Paranoid Productions plc. while the exhibition will be set up by members of the Gallery. One of those who wrote and organised the revue was author James Kelman. The exhibition is being presented by Euan Sutherland and Ross Sinclair. So do yourself a favour, come along and see the real Glasgow stand up.

...On the other hand not everyone is in complete agreement with *Workers City*. **James Wilson** voices an alternative viewpoint, by questioning their relevance in Glasgow 1991 and wonders who are these Real People Anyway?

Outside the Scotia bar in Stockwell Street, an engagingly dark and low-slung howff populated mainly by folk music victims and widely known as the informal HQ of the Workers' City boys, proprietor Brendan McLaughlin has had a sign erected - not so much advertisement as manifesto - advertising his pub's distinctions. Most of the claims are either true, like the one about it being a "writers retreat", or have the charm of debatability, like its claim to offer the biggest welcome in the world.

But one, or the latter half of one, goes beyond truth and fiction into the Twilight Zone of Glasgow metaphysics, an alternative universe in which Molly Weir and William McIlvanney are collaborating on a thriller in which a Townhead junkie is found beaten to death with a pair of wee black sannies in the lavvy of the Toughest Pub in Glasgow, while outside their study John McLean and Michael Donnelly are leading Red Clydeside on a march to George Square to string up Pat Lally and declare a Glasgow Soviet. This is what is wrong with Workers' City and this is what it says:

Real Ale And Real People Served Here

The ale I'll take on trust: as an unreal person - I do so love a good stereotype but I go more for costly designer lagers and cocktails at Rogano, of course. But *real people*? Here you have the Workers' City fallacy as frankly expressed as you'll ever see it. Like its' favourite pub, Workers' City, divides Glasgow with the certainty of Jehovah into the elect and the reprobate, the real people (the honest, unsophisticated, salt-of-the-earth souls from whom the Real Glasgow is being stolen) and the others (the yuppies, class traitors, and non-Scottish cultural carpetbaggers who are going to steal it).

Workers' City cherishes an invertedly idealised vision of its real people that derives from a

miserable perversion of socialism known to Marxists as *workerism*, the idea that virtue resides in victimhood and oppression. It glorifies poverty and deprivation and the stunted outlook that they breed, much as Western tourists admire the 'spirituality' and 'simplicity' of the Third World. Hence its rage at Glasgow 1990, its detestation of the thought that ordinary Glaswegians might enjoy the opportunity to sample "irrelevant" forms of culture less doggedly lumpen-proletarian than the People's Palace's loving recreation of a wretched cubicle in some lousy model lodging house. Workers' City loves a working class it can patronise.

What else it loves is the past, a past often recently discovered and invariably invested - like its newfound love of Glasgow Green and the gothic hell of Paddy's Market - with all the hindsight cosiness of a Sunday Post editorial on the Good Old Days before decadence took a hold. I can go some way with them when they regret the passing of heavy industry in Glasgow and its replacement by a service economy. But in the first place, those days are not coming back; and in the second place, life for the real people wasn't much fun then either. I remember it well from the 1960's, all that real work in shipyards and forges, it made men like my father old before their time and then it killed them. And we were *still poor*; poor as cats, but real as rickets.

Will - can? - Workers' City find something useful to do now that it doesn't have the Year Of Culture to kick around any more? I don't think so. Workers' City will remain a small group of intellectual nostalgists utterly isolated from the people they profess to represent, perfectly virtuous and perfectly ineffectual. Glasgow is not how they think it is and its *real people* have no intention of conforming to the way Workers' City thinks they ought to be. And all the yuppie-hating and mean-minded nay-saying in Stockwell Street won't change the reality of that a bit.

So what do you think? We'll reward the best letters with a pint of real ale in the Scotia or a spritzer in D'arcy's. Or is that the other way around ...

LETTERS

BEAT THE DEVIL

To the Editors:

I was pleased to read in your May 30, 1991 issue that Willibald Sauerländer (in his review of my book *The Devil at Isenheim*) concurs in my identification of the youthful woman (on the temple threshold) as Ecclesia, but I regret that he did not comprehend my arguments identifying the "green angel" as Lucifer. He wrote (page 42), "Ruth Mellinkoff has obscured her important discovery, the identification of the crowned figure in the temple as 'Ecclesia,' by inviting the Devil to the nativity." But strangely this reviewer overlooked the fact that Grünewald was not the only artist or writer to have "invited the Devil to the nativity." I mention that a demon appears in Hugo van der Goes' *Adoration of the Shepherds*—identified by Robert Walker (page 30); that Lucifer and his cohorts appear at the Nativity in *Das hessische Weihnachtsspiel* (again page 30); and that Lucifer and other devils are present at the Nativity in other plays and texts (notes, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, page 97). And I would add Botticelli's *Mystic Nativity* (London, National Gallery) in which five devils are portrayed scurrying away at the bottom of the painting.

Moreover, Willibald Sauerländer completely ignored the significance of the "ransom theory," as well as the significance of the peacock's crest as an attribute of Lucifer-the-serpent in Garden of Eden portrayals. On the other hand, he not only did not deal with my arguments, he merely stated that this green angel is a seraph, and offered no evidence whatsoever. The identification of this angel as a seraph is one of the suggestions that has been repeatedly offered in the literature—always without any evidence—opinion without attempt at

derlies the luminous iconography of the Isenheim altarpiece. Just for this reason Grünewald did not confound angels with the devil or—may I add—introduce a chamber pot into Christ's Nativity as a symbol of "the decay of the ruined tabernacle of David" as Dr. Mellinkoff suggested (*The Devil at Isenheim*, p. 61). To the impressive list of reviews of her book which Dr. Mellinkoff has offered to your readers should be added one from the *Burlington Magazine* (August 1990, p. 587, signed J.-M.M.) which concluded: "Grünewald may have been an innovative artist interested in typological symbolism but even his imagination had limits." One can only agree.

GLASGOW'S GLASGOW

To the Editors:

It's great to be able to write about something if you don't need to bother with facts.

The article by Gordon A. Craig, "Glesca Belongs to Me!" in your April 25 issue is a first-class example. In fact it has so many sweeping statements and inaccuracies it's difficult to know where to start.

Where is his evidence for making the claim "it can be fairly said that Glasgow's year as Cultural Capital of Europe was neither a financial nor a cultural success"? Craig says only four events were seen as positive achievements. Everyone else thinks otherwise.

During 1990 there were more than 9,000,000 attendances at the 3,409 events mounted in 365 days. About 4,000,000 visitors came to the city and spent £80,000,000. About 8,000 jobs were created by our cultural celebrations.

There were more than 900 community events in local areas throughout the city, involving local community and ethnic groups and people with disabilities.

"The Big Day"—Europe's biggest free

Mr. Lally's parade of statistics, intended to prove the gains accruing to the city during 1990, is meaningless because unaccompanied by any statement of costs. Enterprises like the Cultural Year do not come free, and the expenses that are not covered by private subventions must be paid out of public funds or the sale of public properties. Even the "Big Day" was free only in the sense that one did not have to buy a ticket to attend. In his impressive critical articles on the Cultural Year in *ArtWork*, David Kemp wrote that, on two trips to Paris, he had noticed a young female executive on the plane and had learned later that she was coordinator for an agency called "Streetbiz," which, he assumed, brought "buskers to Glasgow after extensive searches throughout Europe." In the end, the costs of this effort, like the fares of those who traveled to European pleasure parks to find models for the Council's plans to exploit Glasgow Green, came out of the public pocket.

Mr. Lally's silence about the financial aspects of the Cultural Year extends even to his defense of the centerpiece of the whole extravaganza, the exhibition called "Glasgow's Glasgow," whose deficit by the end of the year was, as my article made clear, staggering and notorious.

With respect to the planning staff's failure to emphasize excellence in Scottish artistic activity, Mr. Lally's letter is evasive, and the exhibitions that he singles out for praise—The Art Machine (whatever that may have been), Treasures of the Holy Land, and The Age of Van Gogh—support the case of his critics.

QUERY

To the Editors:

For an authorized biography of the motion picture and television actress Donna Reed, I would appreciate hearing from anyone

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proof.

I also regret that the reviewer failed to understand the main thesis of my book—that the altarpiece incorporates the most popular beliefs of the Middle Ages (and later). My aim was to avoid occult interpretations and in fact I repeatedly emphasized the simplicity of the concept of Christian salvation that underlies the meaning of the whole altarpiece. Any occultism is in the reviewer's mind, not mine, nor was it present in Grünewald's mind or the minds of sixteenth-century viewers!

Recently some additional fascinating evidence has come to my attention that argues for my interpretation of Grünewald's green angel as Lucifer—namely, a beautiful, green-feathered angel-Devil painted by Filippo Lippi for a legendary story in the life of St. Stephen (Prato Cathedral). He appears in a scene as the Devil who replaces infant St. Stephen with another child, and in color the Devil looks like the twin of the angel-Lucifer I identified in Grünewald's panel. This scene is reproduced in color in *Filippo Lippi* (by Gloria Fossi) published by Scala, Florence, 1989, pp. 50 and 51. It seems that Filippo Lippi also remembered that Lucifer was as much beautiful angel (though fallen) as devil.

We all know that men of good will, including scholars, often disagree; this is reaffirmed by the reviews of my book whose opinions differ from Willibald Sauerländer's. Your readers may find them interesting for comparison; I mention some that have appeared in the following: *The New York Times*; *The Los Angeles Times*; *The San Francisco Chronicle*; *The Library Journal*; *Manuscripta*; *Commonweal*; *Revue de l'art*; *The Ricardian*; *The Theology Digest*; *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*; *The New Republic*; *Bibliothèque d'humanisme et Renaissance*; *The Journal of Art*; and *Speculum*.

Dr. Ruth Mellinkoff

Los Angeles, California

Willibald Sauerländer replies:

I am delighted that Dr. Mellinkoff agrees with me that no hidden occult meaning un-

street party and musical event—brought more than 500,000 people into the city centre for a day of free music by performers as varied as Wet Wet Wet, Deacon Blue, Sheena Easton and hundreds of community street entertainers.

Of the 1,000 exhibitions during 1990, among the outstandingly successful were *The Art Machine*, *Treasures of the Holy Land* and *The Age of van Gogh*.

Craig quotes David Kemp on the city's "absence of any effort to seek out excellence in any field of Scottish artistic activity and build around it." Where were they both when the city announced the biggest-ever series of civic commissions in the United Kingdom, in opera, music, dance, sculpture, ballet, to Scottish composers, playwrights, artists and performers?

And as to Craig's attack on Glasgow's Glasgow. He states "most of the works were borrowed from other Glasgow museums" and people were being "asked to pay to see things given in trust to the people of Glasgow." This is not the case—artifacts were borrowed from many hundreds of sources worldwide. Glasgow's Glasgow was a unique exposition of the history of the city that Glaswegians and visitors to the city will never see together again. Attendance far from being "disappointing," reached 500,000 over its planned six month run, making it the largest and best attended temporary exhibition ever held in Scotland since World War II.

I could go on and on, but life's too short.

Pat Lally

Leader of the Council
City of Glasgow
Glasgow, Scotland

Gordon Craig replies:

It is understandable that Pat Lally should have been nettled by my criticisms of Glasgow's Cultural Year, but his rejoinder does not persuade me that they were unjustified. His letter would not have been written if it were true that "everyone else thinks otherwise," and his arguments have the fatigued sound that comes from repetition before many audiences.

who knew her or has correspondence or other materials shedding light on her life and career.

Jay Fultz

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Lincoln, Nebraska 68508

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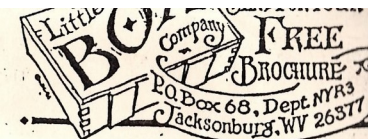
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Dear Peter. . .

David Kemp intercepts a letter from a Lallygrad to the Arts Council of Great Britain

Lord Palumbo
Chairman
Arts Council of
Great Britain
14 Great Peter Street,
London SW1P 3NQ

Dear Peter,

I hope you remember Lallygrad. It's the one-party state just south of the Baltics, famous for its Stakhanovite "cultural workers". Last year, when we were *European City of Culture*, they exceeded their norms. Indeed, our hard-working propaganda department has produced some impressive statistics to silence the sceptics (a few, regrettably, still exist). How's this for a broadside? Nine million attendances, nearly 3,500 events, 8,000 jobs created, and four million visitors spending £80,000,000. They seem to be able to produce figures like these to suit all occasions!!

We are all delighted that Lallygrad has been short-listed, along with Hampshire, Bradford and the Northern Region in the competition to find Britain's City of the Visual Arts for 1996 in your wonderful ARTS 2000 contest. Some might think that the prize money (£250,000) is derisory, or that the idea itself (you describe it as "the countdown to the millennium" is bombastic or even absurd. We do not. Lallygrad thrives on "the big ones" and the MacSaatchi brothers are standing by.

My real purpose in writing, however, is to share with you the secret of Lallygrad's success, as I was a little perturbed by the response of your officials to our outline submission. They have said that they would like to see proposals "for ensuring

the genuine involvement in and ownership of the year by the city's artists and art organisations". That, they have failed to understand, is just not the way we do things in Lallygrad.

There are malcontents, of course, who do not share our vision. It is, I know, being said that the old saying, "See Naples and Die" has been replaced by "See Lallygrad and Resign". Some even say that, now that 1990 has gone, the biggest sound to be heard in cultural circles here is the sound of people packing their bags and, worse, that the wrong people are going. I know that you will be delighted to know that Julian Spalding, Bob Palmer and Neil Wallace, who have sometimes been unfairly characterised as the three stooges, are staying on.

We are particularly glad to see the back of Elspeth King, who had made the People's Palace a focus for political undesirables. She had been a thorn in our flesh for too long. Her mistakes were to oppose the privatisation of Flesher's Haugh, a derelict park in part of the city we thought everyone had forgotten about, and *Lallygrad's Lallygrad*, which our leader, Patrick Lally rightly describes as "a unique exposition of the history of the city" in the current issue of the *New York Review of Books*. It certainly was unique, in that it lost £4.6m of public money, and we're certainly not going to do that again (joke!!)

We were, sadly, having to monitor Ms(!) King's mail and, of course, we had already dismissed her assistant, Michael Donnelly, for writing a letter in her defence to a local newspa-

per. Although we cannot always control the local press as we would like, we do have a ban on any councillor or official talking to newspapers without official approval. I know that the Soviet and Chinese "old guard" (if I can put it like that) in our twin cities of Rostov-on-Don and Dalian are always interested in how we manage to operate it so effectively. Even Comrade Donnelly seemed to get the message at last (though it was too late to save him); he elected to keep silent at his own industrial tribunal!! However, the unexpected resignation of John Whiteman from the School of Art after less than a year in the job may have raised some questions in London. After all, his predecessor, Thomas Pannell (our decoders are still working on his recent letter to the *Lallygrad Herald*) wasn't there very long either. I'm afraid they used to tell left-handed fridge jokes about him. It's being said that while the loss of one director may be regarded as a misfortune, two looks like carelessness. I can assure you that we identified "Dr" Whiteman as a troublemaker as soon as he appeared on television attacking our leader's decree anent the Concert Hall paintings. He has definitely let the school down badly by his criticism of "poor academic standards, over-staffing and lackadaisical attitudes". Why change the habits of a lifetime, say!!!

Which brings me to another area of potential misunderstanding when it comes to your assessment of the Lallygrad proposal. Any paymaster (and here, I know, we will have your full support!!) knows that

artists need a firm hand. Fortunately, they are not collectivist by temperament (R.I.P., then, the Scottish Union of Art Workers), and we keep them in line very successfully with the well-tried stick-and-carrot technique. The carrot is a £3,000,000 investment fund, set up in 1989 and administered by our Mr Spalding, to acquire the works of living artists. No artist can ever be sure that his works will be bought if he is too outspoken. Better to be safe than sorry, say!!

Unfortunately, we could not have predicted that Ian McCulloch, the

canna come in."

I fear, however, that further embarrassment may lie ahead. No doubt with their eyes on media coverage, the region (Lallygrad, I fear, is still only a district, though we hope that will soon change!) applied for an interim interdict to prevent removal of the paintings. Now there is to be a full court hearing in December, at which they will argue, no doubt that we have been shamefully high-handed in our treatment of their gift.

We had hoped to avoid this kind of unwelcome interference by s-

"I have to say, between ourselves, that the idea of involving artists, architects, businessmen and unions, along with councillors, in the decision-making process was perhaps a little too 'democratic' in flavour for Lallygrad!"

artist whose work we are intending to remove from the Concert Hall, would turn out to be a troublemaker, and would try to stir things up by writing letters to all and sundry. As a result, there are some embarrassing stories doing the rounds. Like the one about Bruce Millan, the EC's Commissioner for Regional Policy arriving at the hall and asking to see the paintings. "The last time I was here, I signed a cheque for £8,000,000 as the EC contribution to this place", he is supposed to have told our security guard. I, for one, am delighted by the guard's reported response: "That dis'nae matter tae me. Ah've ma orders. Ye still

ting up a company, Lallygrad Cultural Enterprises, to run the concert hall. *Lallygrad's Lallygrad* was also a limited company, with four of our officials on the board. I had a neat arrangement that meant to stop too many awkward questions. But now Ian McCulloch has had the gall to complain to the Local Government Ombudsman. I am somewhat disturbed to hear that this functionary now feels that "the increasing practice of local authorities to become involved in establishing limited companies may well necessitate a review of the Commissioner's jurisdiction" he is to be able to respond adequately to complain-

Editorial Comment

Strategy: get Charter

Lallygrad functionary to

about their activities". Pass the sickbag, Alice.

But these are petty matters, unlikely, I am sure, to affect your decision. There are, however, one or two other small points in your officials' reaction to our submission that slightly worry me. For instance, they say that they were "particularly interested in the plans for a National Gallery of Modern Art and would like to see how these plans are likely to be realised". You tell me!! (only joking!). Between ourselves, our best bet is to try and grab a slice of the action from Edinburgh. There's money in the kitty for a new National Gallery of Scottish Art, and we shall be making sure that some of it comes to Lallygrad. Our Mr Spalding is learning to play the "Scottish card" (I don't know if you've been following his attacks on the proposed "Museum of Scotland"!!), and he will have more time for national politics now that he's managed to suppress internal dissent.

Some irresponsible trouble-makers have also been scornful of our commitment to establish "a Public Arts Strategy" — and implement an "Art in Public Spaces scheme" as a "permanent component of city urban and environmental planning". They may even have got to you and told you that they have heard it all before. It is true that David Harding and Peter Booth did make proposals for a Public Art Commission, back in 1988, but I have to say, between ourselves, that their idea of involving artists, architects, businessmen and unions, along with councillors, in the decision-making process was perhaps a little too "demo-

cratic" in flavour for Lallygrad!

With hindsight, they had some ideas might have benefited the Year of Culture. I am thinking particularly of their plans to use sculptors like David Mach, Ian Hamilton Finlay and Eduardo Paolozzi along the river here, and to have other sculptors and muralists work on the motorway entrances to the city centre between the Kingston Bridge and Townhead. I seem to remember that Bruce McLean even wanted to build a pub at Lallygrad Cross!! That the whole idea was dropped suddenly, and without any explanation, is just part of the Lallygrad style!

I hope that Mr Harding will have been gratified to see so many of his ideas emerge in our proposal document for Arts 2000. I have to confess that he was not consulted before the Lallygrad Development Agency set up its own high-powered feasibility study from Isabel Vasseur, Michael Dale and KPMG Management Consulting "to scrutinise the social, economic, financial and aesthetic input". But that, as you must know by now, is also the Lallygrad style.

Finally, some of our critics say that we could have done more to support the Third Eye Centre, which is now 'dark' (as I gather they say in the trade). We all know that it's easy enough to run up debts of £600,000. Look at *Lallygrad's Lallygrad* — or the SECC, where they managed to drop £500,000 on *West Side Story*! The ugly canard I want to nail is that we're against the sort of even limited "independence" represented by the Third Eye, and that

we're happier with venues like the Tramway where we have total control — even, for instance, over the books and magazines sold. We certainly don't blame Chris Carrell, the former director. As you know, we've taken him on as 'Arts 2000 Consultant', and he's co-ordinating our final proposal.

Strategic planners like myself don't see a lot of art as such. But those who aren't for ever burning the midnight oil like us (!) tell me that there's still a very lively local arts scene here. A man I met in Babbity Bowster, a well-known Lallygrad hostelry, told me that within the past month he'd been to stimulating exhibitions by artists as diverse as Todd Garner and Rosann Cherubini in the 90s Gallery, Claire Harrigan at the Gate House Gallery in Eastwood, and Blair Anderson and Bill McNamara at the Compass, and that he'd particularly enjoyed the work of Harrigan (brilliant landscapes and still lifes) and Cherubini (interesting objects in box constructions). I had to take issue with him, however, when he pointed out that the shows were all in private galleries where the dead hand of Lallygrad was still but lightly felt.

You now have our budget of £6.3m, and our Mr Carrell is now engaged in a consultation exercise with, as he puts it "key members of the arts community" before our final submission to yourselves on November 15. I hope to see you on January 14, when your selection panel visits Lallygrad, and I am keeping my fingers crossed that on January 28, when the winner is announced, it will once again be trebles all round!

ARTS for a New Century — a Charter for the arts in Scotland is a fine sounding programme of conferences and submitted papers that has been running in Scotland since September and has another month to go before a report will be prepared for presentation to the Arts Council of Great Britain next year. Sponsored by the Scottish Arts Council, the Scottish Museums Council and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, it covers a wide range of activities including the visual arts, crafts, dance, drama, music and literature, and assumes (without saying so) that the development of the arts can be programmed like any other government-sponsored activity, whereas the true essence of most artistic pursuits is that it is a process of discovery whose outcome cannot be determined.

Nevertheless, given the terrible state of the arts in Scotland today — the demise of the support for the crafts from the Scottish Development Agency and the Highlands and Islands Development Board, the ending of the Design Council's visual presence in Edinburgh and Glasgow, the huge debt of Scottish Opera, etc., etc. — some clear thinking about what official support needs to be given, and the priorities that must be established, is badly needed. It is a pity, therefore that participants in the conferences are having to pay for attending, that most meetings are held mid-week, that some have been badly attended and one had to be postponed, and that the conference on the visual arts held in Dundee, for instance, included written attacks on both art education and art galleries in Scotland that led to a demand for the submissions

to be re-written.

Just what influence the Charter for the Arts and the English counterpart, Strategy for the Arts, will have upon the Government is another matter. Tim Renton, Minister for the Arts, made it clear in a meeting held in Edinburgh in August that there is little hope of injustices in the overall system UK system of official support and funding being redressed so that, for example, nothing will be done to give Scottish crafts and backing provided to English and Welsh crafts by the Crafts Council in London; nothing will be done to increase funding of the Scottish Film Council to the per capita level provided for the British Film Council in London; nothing will be done to increase funding for Scottish Opera to the levels received by English companies so that any extra money will have to be found by the SAC; and that not extra help can be expected for Scottish orchestras to offset their unusually high touring costs.

Furthermore, the minister warned, future changes to the Treaty of Rome might mean that Britain could end up subsidising Portuguese and Greek artistic activities, for example, while compulsory competitive tendering may mean that even stage hands will have to make bids for their jobs. That, said Mr Renton, is a problem for the SAC at the Scottish Office to sort out. There is also the problem of capped local authority spending which, along with the Charter for the Arts, which is being held by COSLA and SALVO (the Scottish Arts Lobby) in Aberdeen at the end of October. This and other aspects of the Charter will be examined in detail in the next issue of ArtWork.

20 BRITISH CITIES

In the second of our series on the identities of British cities, and their revitalisation through the arts and civic pride, **Ruth Wishart** describes what a year as the European Cultural Capital did for Glasgow

Whose culture in Glasgow?

IN THE middle of the 1980s nine British cities put forward their respective claims to the Office of Arts and Libraries to represent Britain in 1990 as Cultural Capital of Europe. Most of the contenders were predictable: among them Cambridge and Bath, and Edinburgh, already firmly established as the home of the premier arts festival.

The nomination went to Glasgow, a city not immediately synonymous with the popular concept of culture. But if outsiders were shocked — and in Edinburgh outrage and disbelief went off all known scales — the citizenry in the “dear, green place” itself pronounced the selection entirely appropriate. The application had postdated one of the most successful civic self-marketing exercises since the I Love New York campaign.

The pun, Glasgow’s Miles Better, accompanied by a smiling cartoon logo, had been principally devised to make a sales pitch abroad — and in the deep, dark south-east of England where the natives still doubted that the razor gangs had bequeathed their fiefdoms to more civilly-inclined successors. The campaign was highly successful in persuading record numbers of new tourists to include Glasgow as a destination in its own right, in addition to its function as a logical base for exploring much of central and south-west Scotland. Before the campaign Glasgow attracted some 700,000 visitors. By 1988, the year of the Garden Festival on the city centre banks of the Clyde, that number had risen to 2.2 million.

But the Miles Better slogan was also a runaway success in the city’s own backyard, where it became very difficult to locate a homebred vehicle that

mixture: intellectual poverty, moral bankruptcy and political cowardice.”

Kelman went on to suggest that the 1990 celebrations were actually an assault on the real cultural life of the city and alleged that “cash investments in the city and environs were the primary motivation, as the politicians have confirmed publicly.” That viewpoint was echoed by academic Sean Damer in yet another sceptical lament, Glasgow, Going for A Song: “What the image builders were trying to do was sell the city’s investment potential. This was and is the underlying rationale.” That is an assertion with which the city’s ruling Labour group is unlikely to disagree. Where they might find difficulty is in wondering why they should feel guilty about it.

Jean McFadden, erstwhile leader of the group, now City Treasurer and current President of the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, finds no political contradiction in marrying public and private enterprise in the cause of attempting to revitalise the city. “A lot of what we’ve achieved has been through the willingness of the public and private sectors to cooperate. Around £2.4 billion has been invested in the city over the past few years in housing, shops, hotels and offices.”

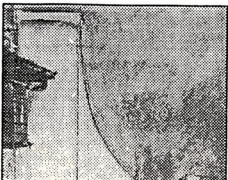
McFadden was one of the political representatives on a committee known as Glasgow Action, which also involved

pense of the thousands of unemployed and low-paid workers living in the aptly named peripheral estates.”

There are some essential flaws in Damer’s analysis of what Glasgow is, and should be, about, and an inherent arrogance in the collective assertion of the Workers City group that only they are qualified to be keepers of the city’s socialist conscience and working-class tradition. There is an arrogance, too, in their becoming the self-appointed voice of the people in Glasgow on whom, they argue, the city’s regeneration and refurbished image have never truly impinged.

That Glasgow still has immense problems, some of which stem from a well-motivated but ill-thought-out post-war housing policy, is self-evident. That this error was compounded by a public housing policy somewhere between a lottery and a long-running farce is not in doubt either. Certainly not by anyone who watched or participated in the Byzantine form of bureaucratic snakes and ladders that masqueraded as a housing-eligibility points system. But an acknowledgement of these policy failures and an appreciation of the scale of the task still to hand should not exclude applauding the very real transformation that has been wrought in the city. It is simplistic to ridicule the efforts of those involved in the mammoth East End renewal process, or to mock the social aspirations of those who have set up home in the remodelled warehouses now marketed as the Merchant City, just a few blocks from the City Centre.

Would it have been ideologically more sound to leave the scars of industrial decline as ugly, mocking symbols of the heyday of heavy engineering, rather than landscape the area



no mean city

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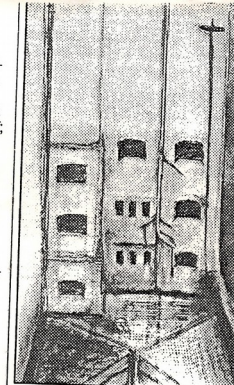
rear windscreens. The more overt Glasgow nationalists among the hackney cabbies even had their vehicles remodelled in yellow and white with the new symbol writ large on the doors. Here was a city that badly wanted to reinvent itself; here was a town its residents were desperate to love.

But the reasons for Glasgow being awarded the 1990 crown were based on a piece of political pragmatism. Those members of the Office of Arts and Libraries who made the initial reconnaissance were not immediately convinced that this essentially gritty city was the ideal candidate. What convinced them at the second inspection was a detailed financial paper provided by the informal but well-established network of arts workers and administrators. Together they had been able to identify an annual arts budget in Glasgow of £24 million.

Together they were able to remind their official visitors that all the major national arts companies were Glasgow-based and that, in addition to the obvious attractions of Scottish Opera, Scottish Ballet, the Royal Scottish National Orchestra and the annual Mayfest arts festival, the city could boast 17 major museums, 25 arts galleries and nine major theatres including the renowned Citizens, whose European reputation was already secure.

Thus began the great adventure: a year of many thousands of events modest and glittering, and a year that prompted an agonising and still raging debate. The core of it is this: are the arts, culture, and participation in the hype of a 1990-style promotion a vital tool in urban regeneration and civic rebirth, or have they very little meaning to those many thousands still disenfranchised by unemployment, poor housing and the lack of any obvious escape route from endemic poverty?

Many of those who thought 1990 an extravagant irrelevance themselves came from the creative community. The author James Kelman wrote uncompromisingly in a collection of essays published early in 1990 by the self-styled Workers City group, who had spent much of the previous year in loud condemnation of the celebrations. Kelman wrote: "In this past year in Glasgow conventional myths to do with art and public funding have been given full rein. The concept itself of 'city of culture' was always hazy, extremely dubious indeed. It had more to do with etiquette than anything else. But if boldness is one essential ingredient of entrepreneurial activity, then those who decided to go for it are champions of the new realism which nowadays seems to cross not only national but party-political boundaries. What becomes clearer by the day is that both the adoption and application of the concept derived from another heady



some of the major industrialists and financiers. Their intention was to make Glasgow an attractive destination for inward investment in jobs and finance whilst maximising the benefits of the relatively new phenomenon of arts-based tourism.

It was Glasgow Action that found the money for a specifically Glaswegian addition to the Policy Studies Institute report on the Economic Importance of the Arts in Britain. Its author, John Myerscough, has again been put to work quantifying the precise benefits of the 1990 exercise. But even in his 1988 research, he found considerable grounds for optimism: "There was good evidence that Glasgow had tapped new markets through the influence of the arts. In Glasgow 71 per cent of cultural tourists were first-time visitors. The rise of the new market was all the more impressive because there had been little marketing from a cultural angle... The response of visitors to Glasgow's cultural facilities was especially strong... 79 per cent of all visitors considered Glasgow was either a very or extremely interesting and enjoyable place." Myerscough argues that there are major development opportunities and that the arts sector can have a very real impact in terms of local employment. In Glasgow the arts were shown to be "a major source of economic activity," with each job in the arts giving rise to another 2.7 in the region.

Yet even the statistically precise Myerscough cuts little ice with the Workers City group determined, as they see it, to rescue Glasgow's past from sanitization and Glasgow's future from the alleged "cowboys." Damer writes about the numbers still living on income support in greater Glasgow and located in the euphemistically designated "areas of priority treatment... the managers of the service sector, the restaurateurs and disco proprietors, the yuppies in finance, the civil servants fleeing from the south east of England, the merchants and patrons of the Merchant City, are able to enjoy their enhanced lifestyle at the ex-

warehouses morally more acceptable to the socialist soul than the bright new apartments? It is evidence of some rather sloppy research to suggest, as many members of the Amalgamated Union of Pamphleteering Operatives consistently do, that this inner-city housing project has fallen to the yuppies. To be a yuppie and a Glaswegian is an obvious contradiction in terms. With the possible exception of Liverpool, no other British city is more adept at putting down, by withering verbal assault, the would-be social mountaineer. In Glasgow, acquiring ideas above your station is not a sport for the faint-hearted. But, paradoxically, realising "pipe-dreams" is a well-established habit, of which the 1990 extravaganza is merely the latest manifestation.

Glaswegian innovators from James Watt and Henry Bell through the shipping magnates like Alexander Stephen, David Elder and William Burrell and the early store giants like Thomas Lipton, the tobacco and cotton barons and the architects Charles Rennie Mackintosh and Alexander 'Greek' Thomson, were people of vision who unhesitatingly placed Glasgow within an international context. In a different, but equally persuasive way, they deserve nomination to the civic hall of fame alongside the great socialist heroes.

A GAINST that backdrop, the current collaboration between a major corporate figure like Lord Macfarlane and the Labour leadership of the city ought not to be characterized as a dereliction of political duty; but rather as a clear-sighted attempt to achieve a commonly desired goal of urban regeneration and more broadly-based prosperity. These qualify as heretical assumptions to the ideologically pure in heart, for whom the longest of spoons guarantees no protection from contamination when supping with the capitalist devils.

Many of those who have most recently put Glasgow under the microscope during what is, rather chillingly, referred to as "the post-industrial age" have made telling comparisons with the sociological mix in Liverpool. And indeed the 50,000 souls who fled famine-struck Ireland for the west of Scotland were irretrievably to alter the culture of their adopted habitat, in much the same manner as Liverpudlian immigrants. The comparisons continue with the ready self-deprecating wit, and the healthy disregard for authority and all its works. Glaswegian children do not dream of becoming traffic wardens.

But there is another point of contact between those spiritually twinned cities that deserves closer examination than it often commands. Both cities produced dominant Labour administrations that wielded con-

siderable power. T battles with its Mil were to prove a sig traction from the b effecting urban ren were many brave i signed to bring im to run-down housin Scaling down the si blocks, renovating, scaping, all helped t many pockets of ho until very recently, eration of the very I erpool had not been ible priority. Visitor startled still by area boarded-up neglect r from the main shop and by the utter der what had once been city Georgian terrac Yet there is no esc the harsh reality tha coming to a city with to decide on job-creat ment will inevitably l an acceptable quality themselves and their ployees. City-centre d ment is invariably an tial factor in that judg The largely pedestrian Glasgow city centre w major shopping devel one housing expensive signer-label boutiques been pilloried as the w of advertisement for r consumerism and a sh irrelevance to the maj the indigenous populat

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many of the benefits have proved intangible. How do you quantify the improvement in self-confidence that may result from a single parent being involved for the first time in a local arts project, confidence which may prove crucial in attempts to improve the domestic situation? It would be crazily optimistic to view that kind of culture as a cure for intractable social ills, but equally it would be perversely pessimistic to deny the potential for increasing a sense of self-worth that involvement with the arts can demonstrably bring.

Long-standing projects such as Glasgow's Easterhouse Festival and the quite remarkable Craigmillar Festival in a similarly deprived housing estate in Edinburgh serve as reminders of the folly of dismissing arts-based community projects rather than seeing them as potent, enabling experiences.

Some legacies of those 1980s ambitions married to the 1990 aspirations have proved very tangible indeed. It's doubtful if the stone-cleaning project that allowed fine Victorian architecture to emerge in its multicoloured glory from sooty imprisonment would have been accelerated without the deadline. Neither would the Transport Museum have metamorphosed into the Tramway Theatre — a venue which has become second home to Peter Brook — whose spatial flexibility has produced many imaginative works. The McLellan galleries would not have received such a stunning face-lift. Significant funds would not have been invested in purchasing contemporary Scottish art.

BUT perhaps the project that most neatly encapsulates the modern Glasgow with its aspirations, its political paradoxes, and its chutzpah is the new international concert hall. People who examine the mechanics of this deal tend to emerge ashen-faced since there is little doubt that the vast project was undertaken at a time when the city had something less than a firm idea of who would pay for it. It was, according to taste, the ultimate act of faith or the ultimate piece of political skulduggery. The man

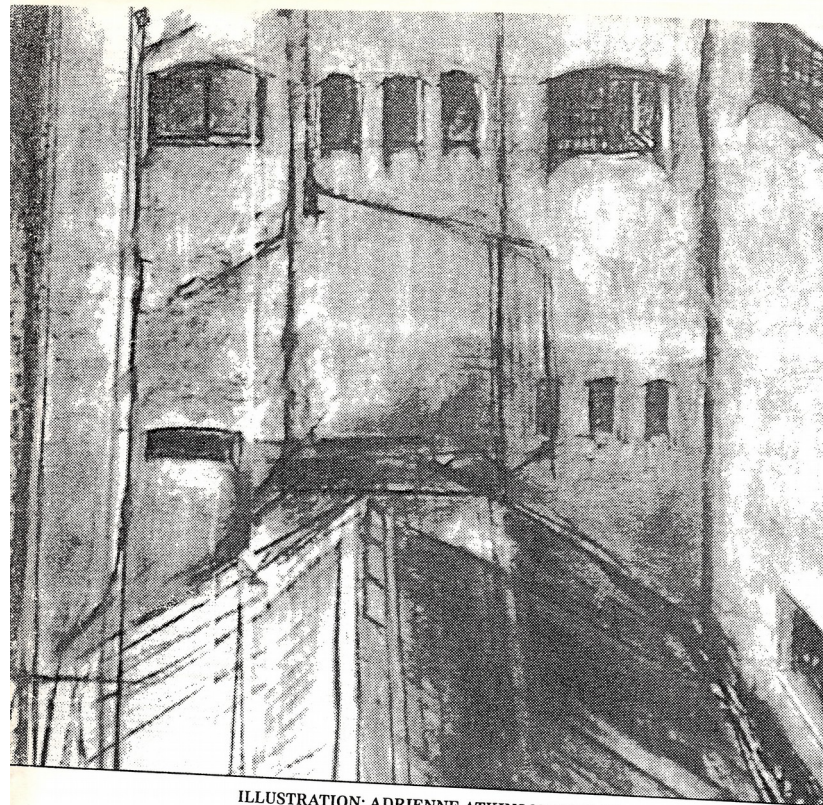


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There are two problems with that assertion. First, that kind of development consistently appears in the lists of priorities of incoming investors. Second, thousands of Glaswegians whose own budgets operate on an altogether different level to these emporia have not been deterred from visiting them as a constant and free cabaret. I would imagine much the same may apply to many of the outlets surrounding the fine new Tate Gallery in the Albert Dock development in Liverpool.

There is another strand to the argument, and it's loosely encapsulated in what the director of Glasgow's 1990 Festivals Unit, now enshrined as a full-time director of the performing arts in the city, has called the "Whose Culture Is It Anyway?" debate. One of the accusations which haunted Bob Palmer's festival year was that events such as Pavarotti and Sinatra concerts with their maximum ticket-prices of £75 were once again irrelevant to the poorer sections of Glaswegian society. It was a particular frustration for Palmer, whose major 1990 promotions with these two stars, the Van Gogh retrospective, the Peter Brook productions and several world-class orchestras, were but a handful of performances amongst literally thousands of community-based events.

He was caught in the media trap sprung by journalists wishing only to chronicle the doings of the megastars and then unblushingly complaining that the community enterprises had been neglected. It became an extension of the annual argument over the content of Glasgow's Mayfest, which has to find ways of reconciling a desire to import international product and a need to sustain a commitment to local initiatives.

Yet many of the most memorable moments throughout 1990 involved the community at large: the 100,000-plus teenagers in George Square and Glasgow Green for a pop marathon, The Big Day; 10,000 children marching with their homemade lanterns through the worst of the October weather could throw at them. (And in Glasgow the worst can be downright nasty.) Palmer sees his role for the rest of the 1990s as building on the spirit engendered by such events, and continuing to fund, where possible, the theatre groups and small community enterprises. One of the first questions that faced anyone seeking funding from the Festivals Unit was how they saw their event or project prospering in the years beyond. For

Palmer the year of culture was seen always as a springboard, never as a finite project. Neil Wallace, Bob Palmer's deputy and now working on the development of the Tramway theatre, points to the fact that some community-based events have found sustained and continuing leases of life. He cites the popular Call That Singing choir which has now placed dates all over Scotland, and the fact that Street Biz, the annual festival of street theatre and buskers is now four years old. "I think sometimes when people talk about whether or not community-developed work has a long-term future, they're a bit lazy about looking hard enough. The fact that the Glasgow Film Theatre now has a second screen is going to be very important in the community field... and so far as using the Tramway as a focus for challenging work for local groups, we haven't even begun to sniff the possibilities in that space. The problem is that some of the very real spin-off can seem intangible, and is undoubtedly difficult to sustain unless the political will continues to be there."

The difficulty faced by Palmer and Wallace is that

ber of the strings involved was Pat Lally, current leader of the Labour group and a man much accused of what we might uncharitably call the Mayor Daley approach to local government — which is to say that too many decisions were thought to have been taken by too few people on the basis of too little information, in a process lacking both democracy and glasnost.

It would be iniquitous for an onlooker to pass judgement, but it is probably true to say that without a robust pursuit of the project, and the consummate game of economic chess played by Lally and his senior colleagues with the Scottish Office, the new concert hall might still be an artist's impression rather than the recent home of the Berlin and Israeli Philharmonics, the Leipzig Gewandhaus and the Orchestre de Paris. Not for nothing has the concert space been irreverently dubbed Lally's Palais.

There were other legacies of 1990 the city would rather forget. The much-criticised Glasgow's Glasgow exhibition, modelled on Berlin, Berlin, swallowed up almost a third of the reserve fund of £15 million earmarked as the city's contribution to the £40 million budget for the year. It was the main target also of those critics concerned that history had been rewritten to erase some of Glasgow's more colourful past. A world theatre season, inexplicably scheduled for mid-summer, attracted widespread acclaim and tiny audiences.

The greatest danger now is that Glasgow begins to believe that the job is even half done. Over the last seven years many influential figures, not least the Prince of Wales, have held Glasgow up as a model of urban regeneration within the UK. It has, in the oddest way, become a "fashionable" city, and those who come to examine its inner workings pronounce it exciting, speak of the buzz to be found there and compare it to a small-scale New York — a comparison increasingly less flattering. Glasgow, pronounce its visiting gurus, is a can-do city. That's a hard-won accolade, given that the raw material of Glasgow's previous reputation was less than promising. But it is an accolade that has constantly to be set in the context of a city where there is still a prodigious amount to be done. Perhaps that progress may be accelerated when those who persist in constantly re-examining their city's historical navel invest similar levels of intellectual energy in helping to fashion its future.

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Ruth Wishart is a columnist for The Scotsman.

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Tomorrow: Richard Burns on the new kinds of fire alight in Sheffield